

# III. SALTYCOTIONS



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**SANCTION**

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By RO MAN M c CLAY

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*The Irish pray on their knees, the Scots prey on their neighbors*

*-Traditional*

*As the Great Cathedral of Cologne was left with the crane still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower. For small erections may be finished by their first architects; Grand ones, true ones ever leave the copestone to posterity...this whole book is a draught!*

*The truest of all men is the man of sorrows...*

*There is no steady unretracting progress in this life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause. Through infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence's doubt -the common doom- then scepticism, then disbelief, resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of IF.*

*But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys and men, and IFs eternally. Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more? In what rapt ether sails the world, of which the weariest will never weary? Where is the foundling's father hidden? Our souls are like orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it*

*-The Author*

*I know that I hung, on windy tree, for all of nine nights, wounded with a spear, and given to Oðinn, myself to myself, on that tree, which no man knows, for what roots it runs*

*-Hávamál*



## -1. The Black Hat Fits

For Scotland's Kings for many ages we observed each ninth to be a tyrant, who by civil wars and all fatal consequences plunged the Divided Kingdom into strange disorders...

The British Apollo [A Society of Gentlemen]

The White Whale is more accurate than Leaves of Grass. Because it is America, all of her space, the malice, the root.

Call Me Ishmael [Olson, Charles]

Never become attached to what you own.

@1231507051321 [Cicada 3301]

### **I . 2040 e.v.**

Jack woke up from a dream, the voice in his ear was of *Grimnir* and it was low, and calm and mean.

The H1's stacked up in four sets of fours on the road.

The words made sense but he ignored them as the dream - *which was no dream, but memory* , he thought- played backward in time:

The choppers sounded like tuning forks when 16 kilometers from the city: rubber on road; raised lettering of Firestones with thick sidewalls of matte black & satin rash; the bearings lightly warped and making elliptical sounds; the vibration of hands and teeth -the gold and porcelain- of the riders all collected on a frequency available to a few locals -some animals- who heard them that far out.

Sloughed off sand danced on cobblestone; people got nervous and twitched. Dogs found space under cars more comfortable; birds decided -out of the black & blue- to go south.

The highway was empty as usual, and as night came about -and as the motorcycles travelled southward from their Denver run- the earth spun Eastward dragging the sun down to the West as if it dove after *Icarus* ; like it too thus drowned.

This was before winter was astride the new year.

Their pockets were stuffed with whisky flasks and PMAGs; bottles of pills and locks of hair from girls they fucked, cut up, removed trinkets from when the others wouldn't bother to look. Some saved fingers or eyes, some the jewelry or IDs, some just memories of the way the girls climaxed just before expiring; *the things women won't admit about rape, that it slakes, that it enthralls, that -if done by a certain type of man- they don't hate it at all*, Jack thought in this hypnopompic state as his Starr came in and out of memory like satellite, Taurid ice, the winking of blue & twice as clear moons.

Earplugs kept out the hum from the outside, only their consciences -which were detuned by the coders- tamped down on the inner din of what they had done and would do again. The lights made pyramids on the road from the stagger of their formation, they took all four lanes - previously going north and south, but now went whichever way the bikers went- as the exits between Pueblo and Trinidad were blocked by the H1s -the truck crews- of the clan.

Clear goggles had been swapped out in Pueblo, dark shades jammed into pockets, fuel they never paid for had overflowed on the steel tanks of the gang who filled up haphazardly -jovially- and with a beer in one hand or a smoke. The copper tank -shaped like an eye tooth to a mastodon- of Jack Four's chop made rainbows of high-octane fuel around the bung and the side, and all hands

were oily and wrinkled from the amber fluids of bourbon -crimson of brake fluid- soaking in.

They ate *Psilocybe cyanescens* mushrooms, symbionts with the Birch and Pines of their land -transplanted and carried like stowaways and hitchhikers on the boots of the *Wolves* from *Ulfheim* - as they read words of verse off of cards that had -at bottom- printed the names of *Sámi* and Siberian poets that Jack had handed them with the dosing and a glare.

They then slid the 2.25 by 3.5 cards -now in the dozens- into their vests after Jack -whom they all regarded as strange, aloof, arrogant, but loved and protected by their King- nodded once they swallowed their meds.

He'd stare longer at any one of the *Wolves* who'd be intransigent -or even jocular- about the rites. He'd make the irreligious repeat longer stanzas as punishment and prelude to being allowed to take part in the entheogenic ritual *of the cycles* -as he called it- before the return trip.

He checked odometers of the men who rode bikes with such standard equipment; the custom bikes had no gauges of any kind. Vin numbers were changed each time; plates -as were the IDs of the men- were fake or thrown away. The motorcycles navigated the open highways and oft-blocked city streets with deftness and *élan* . They went where cars and squares could not.

He'd read the mileage aloud if he felt the number should matter. He never explained why.

"Twenty-eight thousand, six hundred fifty-seven," he'd said to a bearded and hard-browed Poxx as he dosed him by personally throwing the fungus in his mouth. Jack had then smirked at the man as Poxx saddled his wide-glide that was rattled-canned black and wrapped in mummy-like gauze about the straight-pipes. Poxx had

the bike decorated with booty and bounty and trophy; swatches of fabric he'd taken from underwear of young girls, and the bloody hair of middle age women, and glued to the seat were the pictures of granddaughters of old ladies if he came across the *accoutrement* of their bags. That bike -when at speed- flared like fuzzy *Pyrrharctia Isabella*, rusty and black and it primed Jack to ruminate on the before & aft of the moth that came next.

"Plunder and blood-letting," Jack said in a burst, "and the releasing of souls of men *via* their killing, and the capturing of souls of women *via* their deflowering must be made in God's image by mean poems of enlightened doom." He said this as he pulled a rough fist from the soft clear bags -dust and caps, gills and all that, and dried stipe fell to the ally- and he squeezed the desiccated *shrooms* in his hand and pointed at the bikers -well leathered and dirty and gnarly and vain about their appearance- as *Grimnir* barked to the crew that they were slowing shit down by arguing with his shaman; the man on his left-hand.

"Stop fucking around," he finally said, hammering the air with his baritone cords upon anvil of a mouth chapped and bloody from a rock in the road he'd been struck with on their way up.

The V-twins lumbered and potatoed at low RPMs in a line, as the men behind Jack swallowed their medicine and the men yet to come waited on one rebellious member who didn't realize when to be serious and when to joke around. The vibe of the hive changed, and the lone man felt the ebb of embarrassment and then the flow of further intransigence as Jack remembered his face -the man remembering the look- for when someone had to die.

There were 233 men on bikes, on this raid, and they were stacked side-by-side in the ally and on the dark road. Like two woodpeckers to a tree; they rode in strange pairs that portended a winter like none in recent years.

Reindeer racks had been shaved into curls like planed lumber, and in the mix with the fungus were enzymes that had been sprayed to make digestion easier.

“Sorry JF,” the man said to Jack. He then silently agreed to repeat aloud a line from the Sea *Sámi* and the Mountain *Sámi* dispute-poem; and also forgo whisky for a week now as penance. Jack watched *sat -imaging* of reindeer calving in *Piteå* and the minerals being extracted and loaded into belly-dumps riding down dirt - then paved- Nordic roads. He felt hate in his heart grow but it didn’t warm; like the sun visible but cold in space; a light pointed at him in the dark.

He saw the 75,025 reindeer killed as *unfit for human consumption* in the downloaded record; in mere ink and page; pixilated in further abstraction on his interface. He -as the psychoactive compound took hold- saw the bones and the pelts and the velveteen racks laid out in a belt for 19.6 miles that matched the road of the dead overhead; fashioned in the dirt of the arctic circle and under the northernlights.

Each thing was green and glowing and disturbed; hammered copper and iron of ore.

His tribe felt like a giant, a *Golem* , each mission a building of muscle and competence, each thing a *Lernaean* hydra within an *Augeas* stall. Paid for -thus uncounted- helped with -thus discounted- but all still preparation for the final ten. He saw Blax as *Iolaus* , both helper and argonaut and the name of *Leipephilene* populated his interface like a rebuke, a shadow to a

memory, the stain of the birthing sheet. He thus -again-refused to count any of these feats against his total, as the numbers just went on and on in the equation without end.

Each robbery, each murder, each dollar, each plunder had remuneration and thus no honor and this he didn't fucking count. *Not yet*, Jack thought.

"We be the Kings of Corinth," he had said aloud in the warehouse as bodies were laid out. Nobody had one fucking clue what he was on about now. But the *Bacchiadae* -the Doric clan- *restarted the world*, he thought as the gazes looked more and more confused, *with an aristocratic revolution that hemmed in the blood with incest and endogamy and golden ratios of commingling; but exile to Sparta came soon enough, and Helen of Sparta came & went too.*

He thought this as each end of the history and memory flowed forward and backward like integers with no rational end. Each exile of each group from *Scyth* to *Dorian* to those that ended up in Germany and the isle, was like a murder -and he the detective- solving it using all that he'd learned.

Each one was different in some ways; but mostly the same.

*A hundred twenty years*, Jack thought -cupping his hand around time the same as one would a sip of water from a spring- as he looked upon the memories of these dead rivals and his clan stripping the bodies of everything shiny and matte; round and flat. He saw images of the seven sons and three daughters of the old King; DNA rebuilt into avatars in the coder; facial reconstruction and bodies made of ribs and skulls printed on cards laid on the felt of his mind.

He awaited the flop, the turn, the river.

He had told *Grimnir* of the practice of *incubation* , that Aristotle had recounted of *Sardinia*; and the laying of men -beset by nightmares- next to the tombs of heroes and those dead in battles ending in victory and loss. The rains came more and more in the desert; it stung their faces as they rode without helmets. And the sea-level at the coasts far away dropped one inch in a way that meant something to Jack about which he wouldn't say.

"The pen-name was *von Sulsfort* ," *Grimnir* had said back to his shaman, "but his real name was *von Grimmelshausen* . And men argued over how much was autobiographical because he was either accused of -or forgiven for- *havin' livin'* a life of peace on the edge of the Black Forest. But *Simplicius* was adopted by a hermit living in the woods who taught him letters and religion and gave him his own name. After the death of the hermit, *Simplicius* had to fend for himself, the story goes."

"Why you *tellin'* me this?" Jack asked. He hated it when the King turned the stories back on him. He tilted his head like a dog shown a card trick.

"Because *Simplicius of Cilicia* lived a thousand years before *Grimmelshausen's* story, and he wrote the eight books of Aristotle that outlined the practice of incubation you seem to just now lay at my feet as if remedy, as if with sympathy; for my ills, my ails. Right?" *Grimnir* said this and smiled warmly and laid his large heavy hand on Jack's shoulder as if in an act of forgiveness itself. *Grimnir* had told him of his trouble with restiveness, of hauntings and times when he was small and beset by heroin and women with no attributes of the heroic at all. He'd looked down and confided things that other men might see as weak; *but not his shaman, not his Jack,*

*who would never vie for my job, my title, my throne, Grimnir* thought.

*It was always like this* , Jack thought, *a moment of vulnerability bookended with a display of strength - erudition- by the King.* Each seeing the back of the same thing; each calling it a different name.

“It feels threatening,” he whispered now to the moon. “Two card players seeing the same cards but one side opaque.”

A thousand things happened between that turning about of story and lesson, the laying on of hands, and the gang’s exit from the city in a bloody rumble and cockiness of body if not aspect; for the cameras never exposed their faces to the police; license plates never revealed a damn thing.

Jack recalled it though as the drugs came on; and other ideas appeared that hadn’t occurred the first time at all.

*The hermit and the naming, the fractal story that felt now like the déjà vu of a million times and the simulacra that connected me to the wolves, both tamped down paths and scraped the bark of the pines like a wall . How often have I had true déjà vu that was so real that no way could it be faked or random or dismissed?* Jack thought as he lamented how often he had ignored them after all.

The warehouses of Denver -from marijuana grows to REI to pharmaceutical companies- lay inert; the police would not find the bodies and robberies for hours, days; weeks in some cases. The owners and managers and workers had been hanged from rafters by one-ton *come-alongs* and cheap and stiff yellow twine; carabiners; safety-eights. The *Wolves* stole tools from the shops, beers from the fridge, and turned each person they murdered



into a silly-looking doll with their pockets turned inside-out and their eyes pulled like pistons or rolled back or blank.

*Grimnir* had known this was phase two, and that the men needed to use their bodies to settle not just scores but their inner roil. Murder was first not last. He saw that it was ends not means; that the beatings of lippy and uncompliant men and the slaking of lusts unsanctioned by women, the taking of shit not theirs until -all at once- it was, had to be performed and made manifest. *A real revolution*, he thought, *was of the body not the mind; real change came from wiping your enemy out, and planting your seed in their women, and preventing them from surviving once you've left them stunted, impoverished and unable to go on*.

"It feels so good to kill a weak man, like the beating of a stupid dog, the hating of bad, commercial, phony art, the murder of faggots and bums feels better than the vanquishing of enemies with strength, for you know you've acted in accordance with natural law," he said.

But he thought of how it had all started with an innocuous tip. He heard the sentence again, as he stared at his own memory of his Jack who was moving left to right along the line of bikes and men.

Back then, *Grimnir* had watched and peered in; he looked for any fissure, any craquelure, any place where light got in.

Jack -who'd been walking man to man- had felt the Chinese virus was spreading to the general population of the *ciudades* even faster than he'd predicted; despite the orders -precautions- by the CDC; regardless of social distancing. He thought this side-by-side with their own coder's defenses making them ghosts among the living; the undead amongst the soon-to-be dead: the truly

alive. As they ambulated onto sidewalks and back alleys from the buildings that they'd razed and emptied, he saw the bare streets and the faces of the few sickly still about; he saw the way their victims shimmered and stammered and bent; their knees and elbows glowed like gold covered in filth.

Even their fluids, he thought, *seemed attenuated, thin , like waters meant from whence to be drank .*

He had checked in on his own immune response and it had collected 1,001 *clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats* for him to examine under the power of his PGC.

A young girl -a civilian- had wandered from the street and astride the bikes until she stopped to Jack's five-o'clock. He glanced briefly, noted her skin, age and gait; all fair, under-age, and no limp or sign of decay. His coder saw she had no foreign DNA in her mouth, throat, vulva; or anus; nor was she infected with the virus. He walked from bike to bike, chopper to bagger, Dyna to street-fighter to old spring-seat pan-heads and hardtail shovels. He told her to go sit on his bike -*the empty one at the prow* , he said- and he then continued to move along the line.

He drank and wenched his way through all of Colorado; thinking all the time.

He saw the DNA of the *phages* in him, clearly from a new virus that his system had copied and integrated like hanging deer or bobcat skulls on the walls of a cabin. The *Cas9* carried mugshots from enzyme to enzyme and he saw the models his coder had built of the new structures shaped like hearts with ladder of helix up to heaven, chutes of broken DNA down to hell. He shuddered autonomically -small gnats from the cities' overflowing dumpsters and puddles then alighted- and

he set a timer so that his PGC would remind him of the new viruses his immune response was capturing, killing and chopping-up for eventual display.

He ignored the gaze of his King behind him as *Grimnir* was absently receiving the men as they came to him with questions and requests; offerings. The girl laid on the seat and tank and closed her eyes. None of the men paid her any mind.

The fake mugshots, the RNA of material Jack wanted, was being automatically produced by his own coder and immune system. A subset of cells with new palindromic repeats was being built and sequestered in his appendix as he went about the advising -*via* DM- of Paul about who next they ought to hit, whom they ought skip, and who to recruit versus extirpate. Blood cells rushed to extremities as Jack kept arming Matthias with testosterone augments that he'd built.

*Nanobots* patrolled his lungs for fluid and blood as he began this arguing with *Rentheos* -about noise and aesthetics and ritual protocols in the middle of missions- all during this even distribution of entheogens to the gang.

Their bikes were lined all the way across Stout street and into the *mews* like caterpillars and the men's faces were covered in masks and dark dreads or hawkhair made them appear like *Tacca chantrieri* upon saddle-back *Acharia stimulea* and shadows on the big winter nape of the crow's dark necks that circled overhead.

He thought then that, *the fog of August had been thick up high; that the ants had moved in straight lines* .

Like making red blood cells in the marrow, Jack's coder bore more and more CRISPR mugshots and *Cas9* and *Cas13* vectors to be stored in his ruddy-appendix like a

brick warehouse full of dry goods, engine blocks, weapons and microprocessors to phones & drones. His coder loaded more and more combinations of RNA into the database of his own foundry of CRISPR machines.

He held onto single images of dreams.

Then, like an alarm, a recalled thought -inspiration- one of the viruses caught in this dragnet was deemed *custom* ; built in a Taiwan lab. It had been kept intact by Jack's coder and wrapped up tight in a protein jacket of its own; manacled, identified, but not yet cut-up by the enzymes of his own *Cas12s* .

He kept it quiet as he finished with the men and their bikes and headed back to the prow of their ship-of-the-line and showed the girl how to hold on around his waist; using his hands to place her little feet on the pegs at the rear axle as she laid her head on his back and closed her eyes.

The bikes -and their double-barreled, martial roaring-sailed down Park Avenue and Broadway in late morning and then I25; next through DTC, Castle Rock and the Springs their machines descended and sped back into the towns south of Pueblo. The words from one of the *Wolves* sang out in song to Jack just then:

*You've always been unapologetic, but I think you seem more loomingly expansive, lately; lately you've said more as if from on, well, as if you were being recorded or held to it by history or something . You never relax, Jack.*

The man had twisted the mouth in a grin he felt he got away with. But nobody got away with anything in this life and Jack held it the way that girl had held onto him. Jack twisted the accelerator with a snap as they moved out and off the interstate and onto the main road of the

ghost towns with more map-paper than people around. He moved closer in formation to Paul in the lead and thought of how he -how Jack- liked murder, and yet didn't always want people dead. He just liked to kill, to blood-let, to watch the eyes go out like shutting off lights to a building once one's work was all done; crossing off shit from a list.

He liked fucking for the same reason he supposed, to gain access, not necessarily to have the girl be -or get-fucked. He pretended to think of the girl he'd picked up in Denver, he used words like '*she*' and '*her*' in his mind to trick the coder, as he allowed himself to think of the goddess of *Pallas*, of wisdom, of almost no malice.

He wanted to kill *her* over and over, *like stroking her finite pussy with my endless cock*, he thought.

But unlike business -when someone needs to die because they're an annoyance or hindrance- or when he just wanted something out of his way and thus -because the terrain was his- wanted something off the earth itself, with her he just wanted to drain her of life and then reanimate her and do it all over again.

It was sexual and, *I think it with almost no...* he thought in broken ideas as he ruminated again on his cock like a war to the knife, and a knife to the hilt, and how their sex-sweat would run red, and her moans would be in regret and anguish and balance to his wails of ecstasy and satisfaction and victory at last. He thought on the reincarnation of Isaiah's apiary and the percentages of rebellion by the shimmering bees. He pushed her to her knees and like Alabama *Malacosoma* -the tent caterpillars of the *Lasiocampidae* family- he saw the silvery web made of a spittle-spell and seamen and vex written in languages gone extinct during the deluge, the washing away of it all...

He again awoke all at once from this dream, this reverie, now for the second -maybe third- time; before they had pulled into Trinidad and spilled so much blood they'd altered the genome of the town in an hour that seemed to fly by in the long-gone summer heat; seemed no more than smashing a mosquito and barely noticing the comingling of its blood and his blood.

Now it was cold and they were in trucks under attack; and he panicked for a moment too short to measure as he lost track of how much time he'd taken to reflect.

The truck dragging tail was Jack's and the 7.0L diesel was running hot. The radiator had been leaking for six minutes from the bullet hole. The brass inner coils were bent and broken from the rattling of the *bouille* after it breached the aluminum skin of the heat exchanger. The engine block gained one-degree of heat each sixteen seconds it ran at this RPM.

Jack moved toward the back to begin the motorcycle's disembark protocol.

He placed his hand on the inert man's shoulder and let the *bots* work on the body to keep him homeostatic even as the heart had stopped. No *Wolf* could die or they all died. And Isaiah had equipped them with ways to prevent death -even with shock and organ failure- as long as certain procedures were followed. This version of the Medea gene waited as it measured electricity, gene expression and body temperature. Like a ping it sent out signal each 600-seconds and expected a return signal or it would relay apoptosis orders through the air and each *Wolf* would have each of his cells self-immolate.

What had been handled *via* code of the genetic material with the Jacks and Blax was now handled through the pneuma of the air. Each *Wolf* was transmitter and receiver both. In the Jacks and Blax the bomb had to be defused

each month, in the *Wolves* the bomb would be sent within ten minutes if no order for war was belayed.

*From thirty days to ten minutes; acceleration of the code* , he had thought.

Jack stepped over the inert *Wolf* who'd been shot twice in the neck and jaw with a 7.62 x 51mm *enfilade* that had ripped through the truck's armor and collided with the slumped and unbreathing man, then into the driver -in his calf- and into Jack in the forearm. The radiator was struck near the bottom of its reservoir. The road noise increased by 28db through these small holes. The armor piercing rounds were made of depleted uranium. Jack made sure their coders still isolated all radioactive isotopes.

The billet and hewn chopper -based upon the *Confederate FA-13 Combat Bomber* model- was strapped-in low in the back by the slant-hatch of the truck.

A twenty-three inch well had been fashioned -like a trench- into the floor and the *chassis* , and the top of the bike was a mere twenty-two inches from the roof. Isaiah had liked the original project out of Louisiana so much that he'd kept 88% of the design; merely improving the atomization of fuel, exhaust back-pressure and CPU performance on front fork and rear swingarm-compression to adjust for when the bike leaned into turns at increasing speeds.

For speeds would always increase.

Jack had a memory -again unbidden- arise, and the recall was haptic. He felt -in his body as the memory replayed- the way one feels as one brakes before a turn on a bike -then powers through it- and accelerates into the curve. His organs braced; the eyes went wet at the corners. The brain sparked and the nose itched. The hands felt atomic things in the air upon their tops and all topography on the metal machine was handled on the pads and palms.

The 127ci V-Twin engine was still canted and opposed at 51.85-degrees; rake of the forks at 38.14-degrees, wheel-base at 63.6 inches; the cantilever rear-suspension was unchanged. The whole frame was billet aluminum married to the 92-NXS polymer invented by PraXis, reducing it to 230.4-pounds of curb-weight. The bike was 99.4% matte black. The rear tire was 240mm in width -the front 145mm- and the cycle had no speedometer, no fuel gauge, and no key for the ignition. It was brutal; more right and oblique angles than curves; it was round only at the wheels. Everywhere else it was bent as if shoved against a wall or redirected all at once by something cruel and itself a machine. It had one piece of bronze on the bezel around the LED headlight; it had one copper button on the ignition toggle.

It said *fire* there in stamped relief, and Jack had his hands - his thumb- on it now.

It had only metal greys as prelude to immaterial shadows, only five-sided bolts to flange one monolith to the next, and its welds looked like a smooth dark beach lapped by retreating ebb tides on a sandy coast way up north and under a wintry sky.

Jack straddled it and lay close upon its backbone under the roof of the truck; he moved the petcock to the *flow* position and snapped the ignition switch as the fuel pump whined. His arm was being repaired by the vascular *nanobots* and the ulna -splintered by being nicked by the .308 round- was quickly soldered by the bone's own separate *bot* crew that ran the circulatory system like sorties above and cavalry below. Pain was attenuated with endogenous opiates and NSAIDs were released by the coder to prevent inflammation at the site of the wound.

Blood was carried away by the *bots* and so he'd have no bruise.



He wanted to call in air-strikes on the police vehicles that had shot at them -his rage was increasing with each bump in the road, each time something with the bike felt heavy or the headroom -seemingly- shrank and he hit the crown of his *cabeza* on the metal roof- but the other trucks in his convoy had laid down sufficient fire to destroy fifteen police cruisers and force seven more off the road. He belayed his wrath and focused now only on the bike. The target was coming up in 2.2 minutes at this speed and he felt that deploying the motorcycle was the only way to ensure the hole was reached, penetrated and infected without incident; a change in plan brought on by the contact they'd already made with the enemy.

*The trucks would be too large -obvious- and roadblocks would be in place , he thought. They -the goddamn Governor's men- had been waiting for us.*

"Fuckers," he grumbled aloud as he wondered how they had even located the *Wolves* argosy; met them in adequate numbers and time. He speculated briefly about the cops' aggressive *ROE* . He thought, *the cops opened fire immediately, they attempted no road stop, no détente. Something is up .*

Two police vehicles -SUVs- passed his H1 -the last truck in the last segment- and now the rear was clear. Jack heard new strafing reports as the police and the *Wolves'* vehicles ahead of him exchanged fire once again. ADX was now 1.59 miles to their eleven o'clock and they'd be there in a hundred and one seconds or less.

Jack released the tie downs, placed his finger on the push-button on the solenoid of the starter and positioned his feet up and back against the rear pegs. His blood dripped onto the engine's valve covers and into the channel that held the bike like a stall; a moat. With his left foot he pressed the gear-selector down into the first position and signaled the

*bots* to initiate final disembark-protocol. The driver was alerted to maintain speed at 79mph.

“Roger,” the driver said over DM.

The rear doors opened, the grey slide and ramp moved out and down as its small wheels touched the ground. The highway was desolate and the eastern edge of their world was a dry plain -shorn close- right up to the roadside barriers. The drift-fences came and went like ruins. To his left was the west and the mountains were brown and hazy and steep.

Jack twisted the clutch with his left hand, pulled the right hand back from the solenoid and depressed the small nubs on each cylinder-head to relieve crank pressure in the big-bore engine and with the right thumb returned to the starter and pressed the copper button starboard to the solenoid. The engine turned one quarter of a revolution with a grunt and dragon’s breath and then exploded in a massive V-twin rumble; gasoline both burnt & unburnt filled their noses with fumes. The murky bike now was occupied with compressed fuel like corposants in timed bursts, the dark ties laying in a heap like sloughed skins of snakes, the primary drive belt ran to port like a black belt of doom; its seam was stitched like a scar, its white letterings coming to the eye like a strobe. The bars vibrated his hands like a jack-hammer. He - with his mass pressed, legs squeezing the tank, hands gripping the bars, and as it tried to spout up- he was sitting upon a nearly 500-pound bomb.

Jack pushed off with the feet -looking ahead through the truck and the windshield and thought he saw in the light and the road the ribs of inmate 16180339 as if from Jonah’s position in the whale- as he and the iron horse -made white as the lights from a police SUV coming up behind swallowed all color save the shadow his own body lay down on the backbone of the chop- rolled rearward onto the ramp and -

all at once as the H1 sped up- he moved down and out onto the road.

He twisted the throttle with his right hand, released the clutch with the chiral twist of the left and powered instantly whilst leaning hard to leeward, and up shifting into each of six -then seven- gears; passing between all trucks -and the police SUV's as they took flak and fire -the tracer rounds between each side's armada seemed like cat's cradle of red, and orange and yellow twine- and he veered off into the median and ditch- at speeds approaching 146mph. He left this battle of the trucks -of the police and the *Wo/ves*- as he headed directly toward the prison gate.

Jack heard the fusillade between him and the muzzles of carbines -detached from flashes by milliseconds- and the report of his own pipes at the black bitter-ends hovering like ort clouds coming undone and corvids with axes to grind; he saw them like Zeus on Olympus watching comets crash into -and escape with- Jupiter while he -again- heard that goddamn memory of Blax unknowingly narrate his progress toward the inmate:

“Nor will I allow you -any of you- to become a tyrant...”

*Hail and ice* , Jack thought as the motor vibrated the tank, and the tank warmed his legs and his legs jammed themselves into the controls. *The individual and the whole, the grain versus the cold. Four, and four-fold* , he thought.

The Chinese Ai sent a new algorithm to each police vehicle within a 32-kilometer radius of Florence, Colorado and took over the motherboard that controlled the prison's egresses and inner bulkheads.

ADX was now under its command. Jack saw the first roadblock at the gate, discerned the gap, the lacuna in their *Maginot Line* , and accelerated into the bulwark they'd sloppily erected in his way.

## II. 1190 a.e.v

*Tama Te Kapua* pointed at the brown bluff -with his russet arm- that he saw first from his elevated position in the reed ship. His men looked not at his finger but the rocks.

"Sails and oars," he said as his sailors set the lashings to the single yardarm and his oarsmen dug into the waters like plowshare to soil. Their shoulders were brown like tortoise and the hands knuckled in red from cracking the tough hollow-fiber of the gunwales.

"*Hooooaha* ," they bellowed as the white cloud above the island stretched on and on like a halo. He saw himself delivering his men under it like the day he had been given - and thus gave his own head to- the crown. He felt his heart drop as the memory of that laurel was taken from him; and as his banishment was decreed in front of all but two of his wives.

*Kapapuaplo* -a young man of just sixteen- thought between sea-diggings of *Kai mona* -which he'd get by obsidian spear- and of women -that he thought he'd get in a similar fashion- as he had not had his fill yet of the fishery nor of the land. He tunneled into the sea with more *oaha* and blinking as the boat skimmed the water as if above it. The island increased in height and length to them and he thought of the beach while Chief *Tama* thought of the interior and thus kept his eyes on the color of the rocks and flora that became dense in his view.

Tama looked out for light; searched for gaps in the dark of the land.

He sat down on the last bench and began paddling with his oar which was black and brown like hawk feather and seemed a distal end to a long femur; a wooden giant dismasted and the Chief the receiver. The sail buckled and snapped in the *Kona* wind. The spray on his chest and neck

from down in the boat felt like the days diving for shells; the sun on his face as it set warmed everything but his memories of home.

Within one finger to the horizon -a measure of sixty minutes of sixty seconds each- they'd come ashore and pulled the craft onto the beach. Some of the men spread out to the edge and surveyed the crags of the rocks, some went into the forest of light brown tree trunks and foliage of lush and thick green. They urinated and defecated and listened to small birds hop upon the ground. *Tama* unloaded the canoe and sat on the out-rigger; eating some smoked eagle-rays from his hand.

*The next canoe -he thought as he looked out to sea- would come with the women folk now that they'd started a wet-thatch fire that would smoke out -up- to meet the long white cloud.*

*They'd , the Chief thought of his people, name the area inland by the lake, Ta Koutu pa, and the women and boys will set camp while the men hunt in the forest and make guard as I will watch the skies each night as it gets dark .* He thought this same thing day after day as no canoe came, and no one spoke of it as if time didn't pass and memories did not turn in the mind like constellations in the sky.

His shaman was the fin-rock, his judgement was the eye. The gods were his days, the demons were his moments asleep; of no memory. But the sun on the fourth day was the reminder.

Many days had passed since their landing and they heard whispers in rainstorms and saw forms in the fog. They had met a small dark-skinned race of men briefly, but they had scurried away and not been seen again. The men that had landed from *Hawaiki* took no further precautions. They found burrows in tree trunks and freshwater further inland.

The lake was as he had had foreseen. The mountains had risen and touched the clouds and become white.

The Captain at sea -and Chief *Tama Te Kapua* on land- slept during the day since they had come ashore and taken care at night not to speak loudly; not at all but to his absent wives who had already given births: *Ranencepa* and *Sethent*. He saw them out at sea at times, other times he saw them at what was another cove farther down the coast. He imagined them imagining him. Sometimes he thought of them at the bottom of the canoe sleeping; one time he'd seen them at the drain of the sea.

Then one day he saw the man which was a full head taller and had shoulders as wide as two men shaking hands. The man had brandished a *Taiaha* made of bronze; which he -the Chief- and the new-comers would decide was a hard rock made from pulling the souls of other rocks apart with fire and hammer like cleaning an animal of its organs and bones. They had discussed it in private after their first meetings, but while they still lived away from the light-skinned men. It was filigreed with what *Tama* would one day call the *tattooed spear*, alongside the *tattooed rock* they'd found a week before they met the man with white skin and yellow hair like the sun both in color and shock and ray.

They had been surprised by the coloring, but when they saw that his -the strange King's- men and half his children had red hair the new-comers decided there would be more surprises to come and thus, it would be best to stop being shocked by such things. They made commitments to remain expressionless.

The dreams of the shaman had spoken of such things from the days before; in the lands before the flood.

The second meeting was when the tribe came out of the mist and their heads appeared like the star too in the way it burned off the fog. *Kulan ta Moneki* -the Chief's nephew-

would bow to the white men and stare at the tattoos on their legs whilst keeping the head bent. The others made fun of him for this but he was the first to learn net-fishing, and the first to teach the children cat's cradle and more.

It would be him to have the first piece of jade from the South Island and the first married to the princess of this -the *Ur.uke.hu*- tribe. The new-comers had a caste system back home but the *Ur* had a classification of breeding in which they explained the blood and the hair and the eyes of their people; they drew diagrams of the skies on the ground and then lay children down to align the hair, eyes and organs. They pointed with sticks and touched places on their faces; the tattooing mapped onto the ground at times.

"We come from the lands before they disintegrate," King *Ur.uke* said, "large swaths, but while the land coheres better than here on the islands of the warm waters, the men and women fall apart." *Ur .uke* had told this to the new-comers; they'd be given the name *Māori* soon enough, once each man had gained one stone in weight and the women had become pregnant by *Tama* or *Ur.uke* himself; once marriages were proposed and agreed. They had -in the first of many meetings- sat around fires that ringed them instead of at center, so that their shadow cast forward and commingled at the navel of the *En.kidu* ; the place where the King said the gods meet with men. The King of the *Ur* was furthest away and tallest so that his shadow stuck out of the mesh of the other men's casts like the dial to the clock they'd shown *Kulan* on a day of equal measure; a night of one moon previous to the solstice meeting.

The women sat behind the King and his guest -the Chief- like the amphitheaters built into the hills of the island of the caught fish.

The young men smelled the fire and the musk of the females conjoined and the brains rumbled like their

stomachs once had.

Fresh water -from the stream that ran through to east and west of the village, split by a dam the god *En.Ki* had told the first three shamans how and where to build, *in order to match where they came from* , King *Ur* said- was brought now in cups of the hard stone -not unlike the copper spears- by the grandmothers. Their red-hair turned brown and seemed inscribed by fire-shadow as they circumnavigated the two tribes. The Chief saw tattoos in their hair like the men's faces, he saw the pale hands around the shining cups like the white of shark eyes around the black just before an attack.

Tonight was the night Chief *Tama* would ask his counterpart of the nature of the *Puhi ariki* -the women of high status, women who could read and write words down- he'd ask of the ways of the shaman -the *To.Hun.Ga* of *hurewa* and *wetereo* - of religion and this language of both spoken and carved words; like children who lived forever. The topic of the scriven face too would be broached; but they all sat silent as the King -from an uninterrupted line of the Kings of exile, the ones from two lands who'd been run off over 144 generations ago- explained the special season they were in, where their *To.Hun.Ga* of two faces, both languages of man and the gods had been born to them.

"For the first time in seven generations our *Tohun* of communication above and below is embodied in one man. This is Li.ga.set," the King said as he pulled his right arm from his shawl made of goat skin and fur and let not the arm but the back-lit shadow point and then cover -piercing- the shadow of the shaman who sat to his right.

The new-comers saw the finger point toward their own people, the *Ur* saw the shadow lay across their shaman's own.



A young woman brought the King a golden bowl and he looked inside it and nodded at what looked like grey rocks, but were eggs covered in the Blue Lily.

*Ta .Moko* then spoke as he passed his own cup of ink -of ash and blood- to his left and nodded and each of the new-comers -warriors and oarsmen- passed it to the chief at the X of the dial. He rose his arm in the bon-light and let his sinewy fore make shadow on the *Ko.Ko.ran* -the expert in the study of stars- who then lifted his head up and then both arms and thus made motion in an elliptic -not a circle- and explained that above them was a mill. "A whirlwind," he said, and that he saw it when he took the sacred plant and stayed awake dreaming for three days in both the longest and shortest periods of their year.

"We spin, we auger, we dig into the sky as the stars cut like jade spears of the *Tum.at.ga* and cut deep and long into time. We count in twenty-threes for both the child in the womb and the years between the great wobble, but we must add time for the child to grow and also the same three years for the great staff to reach its true distance. The *Ja* were four, and we seek their approval. We grind the *Ko.ko.ra.Gi* like the pestle in stone bowl for the *Kumara* ; the great beet which has sustained us between bites of meat. The witnessing of the stars is what feeds our *mana* between awake and sleep."

King *Ur.uke.* then said, "144 men and 233 women came on our first *Wa.ka*," as he made a shape of canoe with his hands.

He let the new-comers inspect the items of ink and the *mana* of blood. He watched the shadows of them flutter like plucked birds. "Or.on.Go came first eighty-nine generations ago. We have designed the *Pu.Ka.o* from the volcanic scoria on our old homeland, our shamans have dreamed of your journey here for thirteen generations and our *Mo.ai* will help

you build them to settle the war for us all. Thirty-seven, and nine hundred will be carved," he said as two little girls tied up his ferric yellow hair into a knot that allowed the fire light to illuminate the cheeks and brow of his large face.

The shaman had two dog teeth, one plated in gold, one replaced by the jade. He watched the King's pronouncements mingle with the smoke and fire and faces of strangers.

He hadn't thought of *utu* -revenge- in a long time, and he did not want to give the new-comers the word.

He thought of the four *Ja* of the world, and how they alone had escaped the flood. They had brought the spittle to the land before this one, they had painted the chins before the sacrifice of blood was required by the next tier of men. They knew the easiest and the hardest days between now.

*Ta.nga.ta Wen.ua*, the person of the land , would be what the *Māori* could call themselves; *after this mission back out to sea* , the King thought as he watched his shaman - *Li.ga.set* - speak to the new-comers.

The new-comers -those that would be named after the *Ma.Ori.am* - nodded and looked to the vault as the bonfire light provided a shelf between earth and heaven so that it was grey until the black night glittered like the sea in the daytime when the waves crested like the jewels of dried blood & fat on enemies' bones.

"We see stars spin and grind and cut, we see that they break off and fall to earth. We have witnesses to the sea churn in a whirl. We too were exiled, we too found men of lording height and fair skin here when we arrived. Many buried in caves; bounded, some alive for years like days. One day the *Pa.Ke.ha* will come, a future red and white man," the shaman *Li.ga.set* said as his only daughter placed a kiwi feather in his hair behind the ear that had been

stretched again with jade the diameter of a finger, the shape of a plucked eye.

They stretched the ears when the voices of the ancestors were silent; they kept the jade jewelry there like an agreement to talk with one's rivals.

He was then quiet and each tribe breathed in and out several times. Their airs mingled and shook hands and placed feet of molecules of nitrogen and oxygen side-by-side for leverage and position and strength.

"Our people have the Ziggurat of *Mahaiatea* in our land; *Maha-ia-tea* ," *Kapapuaplo* said, breaking the word into threes, as they were still teaching each other each language, "meaning *many white skinned* , like you." The tribe felt nervous for they knew two things at once. They knew that their original homeland was the home of the white skinned gods before them, and that they -they as new-comers- had followed the gods here to the land of the son of the long white cloud. They felt like intruders, and yet didn't want to ask if this was true. They had left under bad circumstances; women were restless and rebuking the men, and the volcanic red stones were already being hewn into knots like the one the Chief now saw on this white King's head.

It gave him the feeling like when he was a child and the great mill had made the future appear now and the *now* fall away to the never.

But, he blinked rapidly and forgot the warring and the loss of birthing, he forgot the carvings just begun.

They had seen the dark-skinned -and short statured- tribe of what their benefactors called the *Moriori* , and *Tama* had said they were scared; but *Kapapuaplo* had hinted that they were plotting. He had gazed at rocks and touched them in ways that lingered in the Chief's mind in the days after the

sightings. Everything looked as a weapon to him, and he conveyed malice in each crag of conversation and scheming in most steps toward the forest.

King *Ur.uke.hu* did not respond to the loud oarsman; he then called forth the meal as his *Ta.Mo.Ko* was explained. The new-comers -the *Māori*- had no such designations for warriors and royalty by blood, only by deed, and the chief listened to the man with a face vivisected by white skin and dark ink like dusky coastal waters crashing in two waves to the nostrils as if they were beach caves. The King's face like foam and spray, the tall body like the mountain covered in light snow they had been shown; the mountain of *Ao.ra.ki* which was a thousand paces up into the sky.

*Kapapuaplo* stared at the young girls as if he was intent on the knot they fashioned upon the King's head. And his eyes were cowled by the shadow of his backlit brow. The eggs came around in the bowl again, and *Kapapuaplo* took two - one in each hand- and stared at their blue color as the wind picked up the scent of the pubescent girls walking behind him with the bowls; his eyes fused with the ones a year younger making the tall King even taller with this yellow knot of his hair.

He didn't see the green eyes of the King gleam. He felt only heat on his back.

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

Jack Donovan spoke at the fire finally after weeks of sleeping off -away- from the group and following them at a distance of many meters as they hiked. He heard the whisper again:

*The Twin sons of Apollo and Stilbe were locked in an eternal battle; between the temperate and wild model*

*Like Scyths before and the Skoti after them, the Centaurs were carried away by the uncut vein*

*Phidias carved the war of the Lapiths and Centaurs upon the Parthenon Marbles that we have today -cleaved in unsatisfactory shares, metopes in England and up Grecian stairs- and this is the eternal question between the civilized and barbaric types, just what was it that Elgin hauled away in the night?*

*Slabs rent and deformed and cleaved, you must ask what it is that I hope to achieve?*

*When I design to flange, to cleave -to make whole again- the thing Plato called the unevenly divided line, the golden ratio of 1.6180339...*

In the vision Isaiah -with mark between the eyes- grinned in more black than white, with teeth more than actual bite. But Jack pulled upon each thread of the riddle and looked down at hands hemmed in by another cat's cradle.

The fires were set so each of Lyndon's tribe could place four around the stones.

Donovan drew an image of *Chiron* in the dirt with a stick; then his constellation overhead. He held the ideal in his mind; between the beast and the civilized. *Would he be mentor to Achilles?* he wondered.

The forest of Japan was black at the soil and green at bark as they set camp on the north side. Lyndon had made sure to shake hands with each of the tribe -looking them in the eye- at the close of day -and of their march- which lasted from dawn until well after dark. He placed his hands over their face -like benediction- once they greeted him and with this he improved their contrast capacity and low-light sensitivity for a duration of eight hours.

He left marks between the eyes; in ash, blood and grime.

He had -many moons ago- assured them that he felt fine, despite the blast, despite the wounds, despite the way he had had to search for them all around the crater and the lake. He recalled how little he felt; how the spasms of thought, the sensitivity of skin, the meaning of kin, how all organs from heart to appendix, from lungs to both lips had had their weakness fall away like leprosy, like necromancy between the gods -the *Igigi* - and the men created by the *Anunnaki* .

*The 600 Anunnaki of the chthonic class between Ea and the Adapa, he thought as his task appeared more and more clear; integers falling away like clutter of facts, like the scale apophysis of the pinecones; his cathexis for revenge took on the hue of the lapis lazuli of blue; the shape of the flexing world; the gift of the greeting gods. What had Óðinn searched for; what had been the strange dream of his before all this began: the immortality of not just the line but of the point; of the man. Each myth -from Scyth to Islam- linked to the greater plan.*

*Rejected at first, out of wisdom or trick? Accepted now as punishment or gift?*

*It had immortality , he thought -the word it meaning both data point and the arc itself- with the name blooming into a black bat of a flower with grey pollen bursting like comets -slamming into it- from its own cosmic vault; sperm and ovum; blood and redemption. Everything grew in density, meaning, portent. He saw *Pi* -at 3.14- and *Tau* -at 6.28- spin in his head like *Ezekiel's* wheel. He saw the mark on the fore; between the eyes; on kin, on these men. On temples , he thought. In cycles .*

*And the glory of God was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side.*

*And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.*

*To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity..." -Ezekiel 9:3-5*

He recalled the first day of the blast, the lake, the throne - *the buoyant throne - weightless, painless* , despite the *avoids* of the water, he thought:

"You want access to my PGC?" he asked Bugzy once he had found him, as they stood over the body of Harv. Flames still smoking back at the rubble of the home. Shit still flying about the air.

"*Naw* , man," Bugzy had said and asked if any of the other *pings* - the beacons- had come up. He wanted to find the others. His coder was broken, but Lyndon's seemed to still work.

"Yeah, can you stay with Jason? While I go get *'em* ?" Lyndon asked as he sat in the snow and pulled on his new boots from the container buried and cold and dark. His thumb was bloody and smeared with the burst capillaries and ragged skin.

"Yeah, what's his immediate," Bugzy began to ask, *what were his -Jason's- chances?* but he changed mid-sentence, "needs? Should I wake him or warm him or what?"

"Set up a cot inside and wrap him in wool blankets. He's fine. His coma will last while the coder repairs the brain hemorrhaging. How's your coder?" Lyndon had asked.

"I can't read anything, offline, total," Bugzy said in this staccato of sentence structure that made Lyndon tilt his head and squint the eyes.

"You able to think in full sentences or?" Lyndon asked in half a sentence as he stood up with a hand full of snow that he used to wash his two paws.

"Yeah, yeah," Bugz said with a laugh. His grin was tilted matching Lyndon's head and his face showed wounds at the corners of his eyes, blast black too like feather plumes that made him look like a racoon. Lyndon held up his hands as if being robbed and when Bugz nodded he then used his still wet mitts to clear away the soot from Bugzy's eyes. He was gentle around the lids but rough the further out he cleared the detritus away. He held Bugz by the back of the neck finally and used the man's shirt to soak up the blackwater he'd made from the melted snow and blast carbon.

"Legs hurt," Bugz said. Lyndon nodded and told him of the morphine in the container. He assumed the analgesic function of the coders were off-line for Bugz as well.

"Who you go after first?" Bugz asked.

Lyndon now saw the syntax was truncated and he felt not worry, but diagnostic, pragmatic. He let his own PGC run ideas for repair. He noticed the cold did not bother his extremities. His heart thumped at 55 bpm. He looked at Bugz and saw him shaped like a hammer-headed shark when he turned to the side and the shadow lay on the snow like a railroad spike, a nail. And he remembered the way he wiped down his ratchet and sockets before putting them away; back in the day. His old life appeared like evidence, like paper thin, like things said to him by strangers with no reason to lie. But it felt like nothing, only information.

"I will make a loop, pick them up. Watch Harv; keep warm. Ok buddy?" he said with no sensation in his chest or pits or groin any longer, his brain quieted and he



could think without affect or noise. He could wander away and not fear anything.

“Ok then,” Bugz said as he stared at Harv’s forehead brown with three lines down and one above.

Chen listened to Jack -he had begun to speak again as Lyndon wandered off- and Chen stuck a rock he’d been holding -as it cooled- back into the ring of the closest flames. He stared at Celina to watch her face and then at Jack when he stopped speaking; it made him nervous when the man was silent.

“And?” Chen said to Jack Donovan.

“And I’ve dreamt of our destination, but I don’t know if I should give it to Lyndon or not,” Jack said.

“Why not?” Celina asked.

“Because I don’t know what will happen if we find them; him, this other Jack,” Jack said.

“What did your dream say?” Gabriel asked.

“Just that it would be,” Jack paused, “well, it wasn’t in words. It was visuals, but I know what it looks like and how to find it on a map. It’s due south, maybe a thousand nautical miles.”

Donovan saw the dreams again, out of order, like a pastiche of a quilt from the first-peoples, like totem of two clans high and of nine animals. He recalled that he had breathed in the same air as *Alexander* , and *Herakles* , tasted the waters that had been in the blood of daughters -of the *Khan* - as they leaked down into aquifers and then bubbled up to lakes and then side-to-side into wells and skins on mares that went west to the land of *Germani*, and then made into spirits in the highlands and yes, then pissed out into the snows of the encroaching ice of the *Hebrides* . He saw all of it.

He saw the sun-wheel in the form of a whirlpool in the Indian Ocean, he saw a *suya* of the solar path, the open ocean unimpeded, and *sauvastika* of bent arms in a night wreck, *an utter wreck* , he thought as he whispered, "*Kali* ."

Chen stared at the fire and heard the *Kali* mentioned but the flames burned it from his mind as he thought of Thea over and over and traced her last movements of Chicago again and again. *Did such cities exist still?* he wondered. He touched the spot between his eyes and it was wet again, and he pulled it back and saw his forefinger and thumb red, rusty, bronzen.

"I see the four-horse chariot of *Mithra* , the four J's of the whirl, ok?" Donovan said with no bravura, no revelation. It was a confession -a defecation- after so many days silent and ingesting information and *mana* and meaning from their journey from America and the first wave of infections and disease. *All those days at sea* , he thought as his stomach still sloshed a bit.

"He's been good to us, for us," Celina said.

"I'm not against him. I'm for him. But the symbols repeat and repeat and from whirlwind and whirling log of the *Navajo* , to the ink and silk of the *Han* , the *moskstraumen* , the sink of the oceans, the *Mezine* mammoth tusks, the *Craig-Narget* to the *Hasekura* of this place," Jack said as he raised the head to denote the forest ahead; what was another day's hike.

The crew hunting Jack Four had been stacking not just coin and wine but obelisk after odalisque as they sailed above the arctic through the new summer-cleared channels of the sea; bronze-age shields and stones, women left alone in beach-towns five miles inland from a coast wiped out in a day. *Callanish* X and VI had been towed in to the ship, then copper was taken in billet and goblet, in sheets and ingots; it was pried up from highland abbeys and basement floors

of cathedrals between estuaries that flowed out into the North Sea.

*The crew , Donovan thought, moved like arms followed shoulders and hands followed next; fingers trailed between and betwixt, and after all that , well, fingernails after that .* He looked down at his own hands and cracks.

The ship's Captain kept his harem in his cabin and everyone pretended not to notice their ages, their gaunt faces, their races of *Inuit* and *Celtic* and now *Japanese* . He tattooed them with labyrinthine patterns and *Sanskrit* from earlobe to narrow hips that he claimed would widen in time. He forced them like geese to make *pâté* , made them bathe everyday in the sea water he pumped in with a wheel and axle, that he'd asked *Vlatko* and *Pachenko* to build at the bottom of the ships. He wrote fractions and algorithms and placed silver slugs with embossed demi-gods in each man's hand as he folded their fingers over top. He gave the wives of his friends wide berth when he went about the deck & galleys and the brig. He smiled warmly, in all but the eyes; those orbs radiated their own lights by which to see; the *ojos* burned too hot to blink.

He called the sea, *the drink*. *Into the drink* , he'd bellow. He called the air the *firmament* ; and all land he said -as he shook his head- *was the Devil's to lament* .

And each time they found or pilfered or commandeered more copper, he'd bite it and side-by-side it with his canine that grew a bit each day -it seemed- before these testings wore it down the same amount. He'd hide the toothy grin, bit a piece of it with his lower jaw like channel-locks, or he'd run his tongue over like a black-monk's cowl, or a chevroned shield and it be the spear.

"Spartan behind," he said as he thought everything was a sign.

But he'd lay hands on each of the crew as it grew; at each stop, each *loch* , each port on the coast from the outer *Hebrides* to the *Antilles* to *Sochi* and from *Longyearbyen* , to *Okhotsk* and *Sakhalin* . The crew grabbed the copper, and the Captain rubbed her -piece by piece- as it came aboard with pelts and sides of bison or beef -girls no more than fifteen- and men with dubious qualities except that they were still alive amidst the swelling oceans and infestations of parasites.

The natives of *Russia* and *Norway* and *Okinawa* would complain of virus and malady and entropy and wasting away.

They had hoarded anti-biotics that failed to combat the modern illnesses; they'd taken doctor's orders to stay home. But the physicians were now dead, and those that remained buried their children and parents and nobody had good news on the new coasts of lands that had seen rise and set of sun, rise and fall of seas, rise and shine of the moon over much more than mere disease. It'd be failure and corruption for more years than they had months before.

Now it was war.

The land was wised up, the sea was elevated, lofty and kingly.

"But the people are as obtuse as the angles of the elliptic at the bottom of the world," Gabe said to the Captain over *sup* as they watched the sun come up in the rear windows of the ship. Lyndon nodded and turned the black fork half a turn and eyed his cut of duck and red potatoes & greens sliced on the bias by the cook.

He'd trade words with the locals once ashore; promise them meetings at the local churches or synagogues or mosques. He'd merely mention -like it might just then have occurred to him- that he'd take copper in *lieu* of gold or cash, as if it

was his third or fourth choice, and might they know any place that had it in statues or amulets or behind glass cases in the rectory, or as bezel to gauges -*maybe*, he said with *nonchalance* - on some factory floor.

"Yes, yes, the factory you say," he would repeat as if he was merely deciding where a good place to meet might be, "ah, the one with copper gauges still in use, huh? Interesting, well, the main thing is it's large enough for us to meet and discuss what needs discussed." He'd say this and the town's inhabitants would eagerly lead him to the booty, the bounty, the largest stash of the metal in between the shore and the apothecary that they assured him had zinc and tincture of laudanum and more. He made them gather in museums and mausoleums, and in old Soviet-era train stations that had stopped moving when the north flooded with not just water but ice floes.

He'd spend days at butterfly pavilions and zoos. He'd walk the abandoned part of town. He'd let Donovan guard his six. He'd talk to him.

He took rat-tailed spearpoints, fishhooks and harpoons, tanged knives, socketed spuds and beads and blanks gone aqua-marine and *azul* and the color of the eyes of the girl he'd lost before he'd given her a name. He saw her soul embodied in heaven, in some Olympian athenaeum; growing wise if not large. He saw her elbow had the star of the flying fish at the apex, the breast plate a mobius strip, her spine was arrayed like schools of fishes, her lungs made of a million birthday wishes just before the candles were blown out. He peered into the vault and saw his unborn -but not unreal- daughter blameless:

"No fault," he said as he read the yarrow stalks, "to decrease what is lower, to increase what is above."

Then he squirreled her away and smiled because he knew MO and Isaiah had no access to him now; he was free. And

the smile was fake even if the facts were not; he felt nothing at all. Mere thoughts passed like clouds, shapes, *sure* , he thought, *shapes but no substance in the air, no intent, no longing stare, no desire in the vapor at all* . He could watch what he was programmed to want, he could act like electricity or magic in a wand. He could flow like water, rise up and be weathered down like a mountain.

"I can be the wall falling into the moat," he whispered to his shaman.

When the crew got back from raiding, pilfering, invading, he could examine them for what they took and what was left on the field. He moved their limbs, he asked for their sins, he allowed confession without disgust nor reproach. He poured copper amalgams in their wounds, when asked when they'd be allowed to ship out he always said: *soon* . And he sent silver to their berths, gold to the hold, and what his sailors -those pirates- called the combination *of tin and the tooth*, well, that he kept himself, *forsooth* .

He watched as the *ions* beamed out over the crew's hands, faces and wounds he'd tend to like a mother, both roughly and with love; not felt love, performed love. He kept records of what was weighted and numbered; he gave orders to the mate's to allow slumber, he pulled his shaman aside one night and said:

"Jack, we spend more and more time at each port, each seaside, each coast we limp along. I'm not rebuking you, but we're dawdling, what is it my man? What makes us linger so?"

"Lyndon, my friend," Jack said as he placed his large hand on the shoulder of the man close to him in distance, elliptical in resonance, "you have tasked me with finding out your precious metals and dear rivals, you've left it to me to give your mission -your recipe- the ingredients for success. Have we not found more metal than the baggers and

choppers we left on the shore? More enemies than you could earn in ten turns at each fight you ever had on your own? Are we not further and father away from Hríð Tòrr?"

"But are we closer to Jack? The other Jack; are we any closer to his trail?" Lyndon asked as he made his eyes wet by dragging a forefinger across the nostril with cayenne and cat dander that he'd dug from his pocket as Donovan spoke.

"We are Captain, we are," Donovan said as he saw his reflection in the gleaming dark eyes. He saw -in those moist eyes- the cabin misshapen and his own *noggin'* glow like muted bullion and a carved skull of the monks of Tibet.

Lyndon nodded and thanked him and told him he was proud of him and asked if there was anything he could do in return. When his First Mate and pal left, Lyndon let the eyes burn anyway, and wiped only the nose with a rag. He sat on the bed as the girls napped and his weight made them rise on the other edge.

He breathed shallowly -as usual- and stared at his effects.

He mechanically laid down; heard thumping of the crew below decks; he felt waves lap against the hull; he imagined swordfish drilling holes in his ship and he grimaced.

Sixty seconds passed, then 60 more until an hour had been reached and dreams sauntered out on his brain like the automatons of a *Bavarian* clock. Drawers of water, hewers of lumber, maids with buckets of milk all passed by like the moon '*round* the earth, like earth '*round* the sun, and he dreamed of things he'd never recall.

He'd write down notes -in the days- that the girls would find as their pregnancies moved further and further along.

She -Miss Scarlett- could tell now by his breathing that he'd been asleep in port for a short time.

He had cycles of four to his sleep; and he was in the first phase; and she -the girl he'd rescued from the caves by black rock had finally had and missed a cycle- and so she glowed now like a lamp. Thus, fearing her own rays she covered her shoulders and belly with a tartan shawl from her grandmother; wrapped her red hair with a burlap sack cut into squares and dyed black inside the buckets on deck the sailors gave her one day. All but eyes covered, all but the sighs un-uttered, as she exited the bed and walked on the balls of her feet.

She rifled through his map-table and effects.

On the desk was a chart of an old map made amber and brown and red, *like a diagram of a Cartesian body*, she thought, *it had the feel of an autopsy and the veins and arteries ran through the corpus of the world with valves and brachia and florid capillaries flowing and flooding all over and over the globe*. Her hands were red and scarred at the knuckles from the banging of them with copper tools. He punished them with implements, so he could say he never laid a hand upon them; so he could abuse them, yet not lie.

But she placed them -those sore hands- on the books at the corner of the table closest, and peeled it open like the way she'd seen him butterfly carrion and manta ray, elk sirloins, taken from the chef with his own cleaver in black -that he carried on his chest like a medal he'd won in a foreign and faraway war- and she stared at the pages.

The leaves opened and she thumbed them like prosciutto laid on top on each other forever like some feast in a *Grecian* heaven with the *Lapiths* and *Centaurs* and their wines:

*D. radiodurans* was exposed to dry copper surface for 2-minutes, 10-minutes, 66-minutes.



Control group of stainless steel, petro-chemical plastic, and wet copper for *E. coli* , and *D. radiodurans* .

Stationary growth-phase cells of *D. radiodurans* were inactivated after one minutes of exposure. *D. radiodurans* possesses sophisticated and effective DNA repair systems enabling cells to recover from stresses resulting in fragmented genomes, damage that is lethal to most microbes. The anti-septic properties of copper were unparalleled, and uniquely suited for prophylactic to this highly robust pathogen.

Stationary-phase cells ( $1.1 \times 10^7$  ) were completely killed after 1-hr; *E. coli* after 3hr when exposed to dry copper surface.

[6]...but *D. radiodurans* was even more sensitive to moist copper than *E. coli* . Stainless steel surfaces had no antimicrobial activity exposure during growth in copper plumbing systems and colonized medical copper implants is chronic, where contact with dry metallic copper is acute... copper surfaces did not increase the mutation rate of *E. coli* ; thus making DNA very unlikely as a target of acute lethal metallic copper stress. Membrane, biofilm, and envelope damage are likely cause of anti-microbial effect of copper. This prevents mutation; this stops acceleration. [Santo, Lam, et.al 2010]

She stopped reading the other pages as the same words repeated; she saw long names for germs and footnotes in brackets, parenthetical shorthand for chemicals of more syllables than she had hours left before he awoke.

She looked up and saw his head -the hair down in his face like curtain- lay against the grey pillow as if sinking into the sand. His shoulders were bare and the old lines

from the old tattoos seemed like the ones drawn from *Polaris* to *Draco* , from *Uru* to the outlines of *Orion's Belt* at *Lascaux* .

She recalled the way he shaved the copper billets and spearheads to make filaments that he'd place in bottles clear and thick at bottom. It looked like autumn gold to her, and she marveled at it as he heaped it up around their bed like parapets and crenulated towers of dirt and the melted helmets of enemies and the fins of fish and the wings of sea-downed aeroplanes. He dosed her each morning and rubbed her belly with the grains and told her it was, *a salt-rub ; an exfoliant scrub to preserve both mama and baby as well* .

"She will live, yours will live," he said to her in a way that made it seem more apotropaic than information; more incantation than statement of fact. She rubbed his head and loved the transition from his long locks to shorn sides and her pinky finger would run the line like he used to allow her *-en toto -* to run on the beach when they arrived in a new port or coast.

He'd asked her if she knew what *ESKAPE* group pathogens were and she shook her head as if it had fleas itself and he smiled in that practiced way. His eyes even seemed copper to hers -which were blue- *and his heart made of the stuff too* , she thought as she swallowed her first words as they bubbled up.

"Maybe that's why he never got sick," she finally said as she closed the book and turned it back the way it was on the desk.

She wandered to the windows of the ship and placed a hand on each thing on the railing and wainscoting shelf; each skull and bone of this bird or that, each photograph or *eschaton* or plaque. She watched as the flames of the other ships lit up the bay.

Her child moved in a tumble inside her and it tickled her belly and mind; she giggled and turned toward the table and in the background she saw him wide-eyed. She remembered the way he looked when awake and focused upon her.

But tonight -now- they slept ashore, miles in, deep in the thicket of forest. And all this was in a dreamy past before they'd landed at *Osaka* .

*Osaka* had required they *be a bit barbarous*, he would say with a smirk that he misjudged. The list of names in his pocket hadn't even come out to be amended as he usually did. He apologized briefly for his error, but showed no actual contrition, and this bolstered the sailors at sea and soldiers on land. They saw no doubt in execution nor plan; he -with dead eyes- immediately reminded them of what was afoot.

"What is the silk of the *Han* ?" Gabriel asked of Donovan interrupting him as he listed the scattered symbols of their ancestors. He moved his right leg to touch the left leg of his wife, and the stream of wash-water off his hands turned orange from Donovan's side of the light.

"The comet, from the *Mawangdui* tomb, the fucking comet, man," Donovan said with an expulsion of air like its own tail of ice turned to steam before liquid, and his head -that great bull head of his- grim and glowing with the rising belt of the *Archer* backdropping him and his eyes absorbing the fire light. He watched them as they washed their hands in the pan.

"Do you think it's coming?" Chen asked as he picked his teeth with a sliver of lumber he'd taken when they hacked down trees for tent poles. They did this so they need not carry weight -or metal- away from the ship.

"Do you remember anything from before the lake?" Donovan asked as he stared at Chen and set his jaw like a

broken bone before being splinted.

"I remember that the..." Chen began with confidence, for he obviously had a life, a daughter, a being he could trace to some origin. But the answer stalled out as he looked at Jack and then at his hands and realized he didn't really recall anything before the lake.

"Exactly," Donovan said with almost no malice at all; a kind of commiseration, a wry smile, an excuse.

Lyndon stared at the crew; each clique. He assembled them and split them apart again.

Lyndon even now noticed he felt nothing; no lack; no affect. He saw each of his friends like stones arrayed in astronomical circle, and he saw The Belt behind them to the north. *It would rise over night*, he thought. He wouldn't sleep or eat. He would move from circle to circle and place hands on them to remove pain or improve circulation; his hands would read their coders despite the implants not giving them any improvement or data themselves.

His hands would then pull the remedy from his own allostatic system -the dopamine, the endogenous opioids, the epinephrine- and let their skin absorb it; genome fixes would be built by his coder and sent *via* viral vectors he could breathe on them as they closed their eyes more and more during each of these sessions.

He spoke less; he did extra -additional- things.

He never once shared a feeling or a doubt or any joy or affection; he just healed them, tended to them, and led them from landmass to Oceania, from vessel to inlet, from place to place as he hunted down each air molecule breathed by that woman who had had his baby girl. *Each person she met -each fucking breath- that spilled her CO<sup>2</sup> into the world.*

All as step toward heaven, all toward his battle with Isaiah and Jack Four.

#### **IV. 2038 e.v.**

The fuel had eaten his clothes, and he'd stripped off what was left of these rags.

The T-shaped monoliths of containers once stacked in the ring now sagged; had lines oblique, melted, smashed.

He thought of the way the winter solstice sunrise came up exactly between the two original containers as he stood on the pad all those years ago. He recalled the first one: red, cloudless, hitting his eyes like the arrows of the Archer.

"Like God's own red-dot on my soul," he said aloud as a comet streaked the sky like a white fly.

He walked down to the slope of the gun range -which had filled with rain water- and he methodically scrubbed off the gel of the gasoline, the remnant of black tatters covered in blood and sand, and the salt and feathers from falling crows and ash. The water was spinning as if draining as it filled up with the melting snow from the periphery.

He stood there in reverie, thinking -instead of moving- and breathing shallowly in the dark with the flames of the compound barely visible above the foundation from out this far.

What was under the site of *Lot 45* was dark, buried, and the original place covered it in smoke, ruin, endless lines of perpendicular metal. The night sky occluded by the smoke. The sound of silence overcome by copper and crimson flames and smoldering greys that sounded like brush on drums.

Water now began to visibly drain out and down. Small whirlpools appeared here and there around the one at

center that seemed like a shock wave and a labyrinth of some sinking island or rising formation in search of merely the cope stone.

He thought of other things; he thought of the softness of his feet long ago, how the rocks had once buckled his knees. *That fat head of mine* , he added, skipping all in between the head and the knees as he then smiled and realized his lips too were cut and the jaw hurt -now- on *both* sides.

*"But I have that within which passeth show; these but the trappings and suits of woe,"* he said quoting the vacillating man from *Helsingør* , still black-clad and haunting the halls of the castle on the island of Zealand.

*The knee* , he went on, *was there for the body -in order to collapse and relieve that weight from the feet being assaulted by jagged stones- but it was merely pain, not injury; the feet suffered no damage* . The body did not know that, *it saw pain as pre-damage, as it rightly should* , he thought. *It was the rational response, to buckle the knee and remove weight from the foot in pain.*

Of course, it put the whole body at risk to fall like that, merely to save the feet some discomfort. He had not sought out any solution though, save one: make the feet more robust to the rocky world.

This seemed both obvious and not obvious too. *Why not*, he asked himself, *make the ground less rocky, or wear shoes for Christsake? He had been barefoot though for a reason, he had ... God*, he couldn't think of *why* now. He thought he had often slept in his boots. Sometimes he dreamed he had boots on or dreamed he could take them off. *The feet are what meets the ground, the body hovers above it. The feet must take the assault, the body never acknowledges this* . *But the body has its own travails, let's not be dumb* , he thought as he squeezed the hands and tried to locate the heart in his chest, the guts, the bowels.

He checked his trunk for injuries. A quote from *Thucydides* popped up into his interface:

*Scythian mercenaries could be seen working as bodyguards in Athens.*

This triggered an image of a painting he had done decades ago; *it was two meters tall, taller even*, he thought. *It was an Assyrian, with a fish on his head, and a bag in one hand, and the head was conical from the fish, right? They battled then bartered for wine*, he thought. *They were seen as louts for they drank their wine uncut by water, and they shunned material possessions and fought over any insult. They wouldn't write anything down. Why?*

*The Egyptians had said writing was true immortality; oh, they were the ten tribes*, he thought and then added, *the exiled tribes. The Scythians were always being exiled; even Dorians, then how many by the Romans?*

An image -cited, with translation- appeared again in his fore:

*As for those wise writers from the time after the gods, they who foretold what was to come, their names have been everlasting, (even though) they have departed this life and all their relatives forgotten.*

*They did not make for themselves mausolea of copper with tombstones of iron; they did not think to leave heirs, children to proclaim their names: (rather) they made heirs of writing, of the teachings they had composed.*

*They gave themselves [a book] as (their) lector-priest, a writing-board as (their) dutiful son. Teachings are their mausolea, the reed-pen (their) child, the burnishing stone (their wife). Both great and small are given (them) as their children, for the writer is chief.*

*Their gates and mansions have been destroyed, their mortuary priests are [gone], their tombstones are*

*covered with dirt, their tombs are forgotten. (But) their names are proclaimed on account of their books which they composed while they were alive... [Ramesside papyrus; British museum (10684) Papyrus Chester Beatty IV]*

But, at any rate, he had begun walking more and more without boots in the day, on rocks, hot and cold; cold with ice sometimes.

*To take life seriously, he now thought, is to live it as if you have nothing to lose. To be contemptuous of life, conversely, he reasoned, is to play it safe and do nothing interesting at all . Those who take no risks never drink Champagne, is the way the Russians put it, he thought.*

More white dust fell upon his shoulders and hair and the ground.

His sister-in-law had actually recoiled in horror at him once, like a face moved by the gods with hempen ropes and set hooks, block and tackle and 5-ton *hoists-ex-machina* . She had said, *there are a lot of good things about Blax* , in the most transparent of faint-praise damnations. *These people thought their insults went unnoticed, they thought they were more clever than they actually were*, he thought.

When you think someone is a good person, you don't hedge with worlds like, *many good things*; you just say, *he's good* . Critiques of those you respect come straight and without sarcasm.

No insults, just direct honest language:

*I think you are a man too eager for rebellion or too libertine and cavalier about sexual morality, and you - you outlaw- you do this all while being condemnatory of anyone who deviates from some atavistic ideal. I think you are too quick to anger and say sharp things without measuring their effect ,*



She could have said that. He would have heard her out.

That would have been not merely acceptable, but accurate; and the kind of critique you give to someone you held in some esteem. But instead she made oblique insults. He had -in fact- told her she was a bit too eager to humiliate him, and men in general, that she had a bit of an axe to grind on men, likely for good reason -her father being a bit of a tyrant- but that her treatment of him -as her brother-in-law- was a bit extreme and maybe she should think about it. Maybe she ought to think about what it was she was feeling before she just said whatever came to her mind.

He had sat in the restaurant arrogating space for himself and spoke politely and with practice and said things so mild in tone and so ecumenical in verbiage, and yet she took the full weight of his rebuke. He thought he had said it politely, decently; he thought he had followed his own code.

"Maybe you ought to see that I'm a human, and a man, and you ought not use words like *small* to describe me," he had said as the Amish kitchen soaked black beans overnight and cooked *paté* and scallions in a cast-iron pan under T-12 lights and ceilings of concrete and white pipe. Small sounds of metal and wood met in the ears as he lectured her in such ways.

They never say, *that hurt my feelings* , or *you frighten me* , or *I know things you don't know and yet you speak over me as if I don't know them and it makes me feel angry, disrespected, unseen* . Instead they make rude comments or oblique insults or undermine you to others when you aren't around. It's always on the sly, as if God doesn't hear each word.

"We get away with nothing; He sees all," Blax said. He forgot all about his size, his mien, his volatility that others saw most when he was calm. All the things he noticed -all

the nuance- in others, fell away when he spoke of -to-himself. He thought his words could be rationally heard.

*She had acted, he thought, with the kind of shock and revulsion only a woman can muster, a woman who hasn't ever been challenged or told the truth before. She was a woman used to getting her way in a world devoid of the type of men designed by God and nature to set her ass straight. She was modern and around modern men .*

He left the memory and stared to the west and he saw light photons from his former home, he smelled gas infused with sulfur, he felt cold at the ends of fingers and toes.

"She went the long way around," Blax said.

*It takes courage, he said to himself, to say the truth with equal parts trenchant analysis and vulnerability. To admit to both sides of the equation, to take your own side, Blax thought, and your foil's with equal zeal. To stand up for yourself while admitting to where you are most wrong. He still felt the water run down his back and legs. He felt his throat dry.*

*Emotional courage meant physical courage, and its why most men and almost all women lied.*

But Blax -he now recalled- had decided in .05 seconds -as the *bio-chems* for anger and arrogance and self-respect atomized and made *venturi* in his inner-engine and compressed under the twin-pistons of his lungs in his four-stroke heart- wasn't taking any of that shit from her. And so in a moment too short to be measured -in a restaurant in San Antonio in 2017- he had put her on notice. He said what he needed to say.

Then he had expounded upon it and written a more complete account down. They were so taken aback by its contents and tone and tenor of *Deuteronomic* vengeance and *Revelatory* vex that they couldn't form words in

response. It would require the complimenting of a well-built bomb, a handsomely carved poison dart-gun, the perfectly planned murder. One couldn't get all excited about its craftsmanship because one knew its actual intent.

Blax let his coder sweep the body for injuries again and he took in the cold and smoke and light refracting through all the shit still falling through and suspended within the air.

The muddy -shallow- lakewater now was lapping on his toes as he remembered this past *contretemps* with this woman; it was gauzy and timeless, as if it had happened to someone else, nearly someone else. It was his memory, but it almost seemed not in this body. *As if*, he thought, *it was a signal picked up from some cloud of static and charge and conducting waters*. He saw copper coils and Leyden jars; he saw whales in the clouds of dark grey smoke; he heard their songs below the birds circling over the ravine; he felt a billion wings beneath his chin prevent the music from sinking deep into his throat and chest. He wondered how far he had grown from the PGC, the augmentations of genome, the experiences so extreme. *Could a man -did a man- change so thoroughly at some point, was*, he asked, *there a threshold in which he was a totally new man?*

"Why ruminate on why people hate you, what in their clockworks fascinates you so?" he asked the firmament. He saw things -smaller things- fall from the air, birds appear here and there from before and behind all the smoke. He tried to predict where each thing would land or which direction it would take. He connected A to Z; discerned bird from bee.

He felt it, but he had no way to calibrate it.

He lamented the destruction of the jars of Tupelo honey and the skeletons of seahorse as he saw -as the smoke blew to one side with a gust- the dark scar of his former home. He imagined the boiling of the *Apocrita's* work, the vaporizing

of the *hippocampi* and then he thought of each book immolated and shredded and now realized that it was confetti of individual letters that rain down on the land, the water and himself. The metal and lumber and concrete had all landed minutes ago; only the lightest artifacts still continued to fall. He saw dust but knew each one was a letter in a word in a sentence in a page from something he had in his brain and now all about him like a feathered nest of a thousand men not unlike himself.

He stared not at the flames of the home -of which there was little- but the absence of something that had been there before. He saw the trees were all broken or bent around the area; he saw that nothing was untouched by the blast.

He used memory to compare and contrast.

But, each time the memory was recalled it was reinvented, drawn anew, so -maybe- he changed it, making it further way, pulling closer by an inch or two. *There is no way to know* , he thought as the back of his head stung and burned. He felt the crawl of the *Deseret* on the neck, he slapped at it but the hand came back with nothing but soot and sweat.

The inner life was as complex as the outer; and as burned down -simplified- at times.

He knew now that he had infra-red and ultra-violet vision augmentation and could read avatars of people's bio-responses like galvanic skin conductivity or capillary restriction which was able to indicate -for most common people- if someone was lying to him. Now he knew how little reality, outside reality -heretofore- one actually saw. The trees and the sky and the dirt all looked one way, but they contained multitudes more in real life. *Imagine a black and white photo; now, imagine believing that is all of reality*, he thought. *Imagine once you've seen color ever thinking life is monochrome again* .

He thought of how he preferred black and white photos 99 out 100 times and it made him wince now.

He looked down at the shallow water of the flooded gun-range. He couldn't see below his ankles. He hadn't known they -his feet- were submerged until now, but then he saw his legs. *They*, he thought, *had been wet up to the knees, but the water did recede*. He let that ring in his head as he pawed a bit at the remaining shit from the explosion that had embedded in the hair of the head and body itself.

He took in a breath.

*Imagine a first word of a poem and the last; imagine that this was the totality of the work.*

He let the air out.

*That is how we see material reality, we think the bark of the tree is all to see, or the meat of it when we slice it open, or the roots when we dig it up*, he thought. But, there are layers downward, deeper, atomic and genomic and even lower than that that we do not see; and yet what bounty of information is contained in that, just like the info missing in the black and white photo that was there in real life, just like the missing words of the poem that are there on the real - and complete- page.

"There's things unseen in me, between my opening salvo and my swan song," he said. *And too in my enemies' overtures and denouements*, yes, he thought next.

*The idea that we see less than 1% of reality is too much for us to handle. We cannot go around thinking we're this blind*, he thought. *But, when your eyes are opened to how much you've missed* -he saw now in the low light, the UV and IR light spectrum, highlights of some coyotes off in the distance, just beginning their night hunts, the fire and noise hadn't scared them off at all- *that is when you actually take in more info. The new info gained*, he thought as he stared

back toward the home, the former home, *and that's when you also realize how much more there is to see all at once. It's the deep ravine in the mountain, the oasis in the desert, the feelings of rising as you just fall asleep.*

He knew he was missing it all; missing too much.

And the augmentations to perceptions just highlighted that fact even more. He had stopped scraping his body of the detritus, he was done and he was mostly bare, small drifts of flotsam and jetsam clung to him, but he was as God made him, with the exception -as if from harpoon and fin- of the attempts on him by other whales and men.

As he then thought of the new foveal vision, expanded spectral vision, and the augmented *somatosensory cortical* terrain and map that allowed him to perceive slight variations that were previously unseen, he toggle d back and forth on the conceit, the question, if this too counted as how God made him. *Or am I beyond ever claiming such things again?* he wondered. But for now, he was at least naked, the clothes had been burned or torn by the blast; or removed by him after.

He, preferring a whole nothing to just part of mere something, was seemingly now demanding revolution over mild reform.

The skin conductance perception would occur like one would notice a *tell* in a card player; it would take a few seconds to load then come together in a thought. He just noticed these things now and they had all been acquired as the body slept for eighteen hours under paralytic suppression to avoid any injury or failure in uptake as the PGC built his new eyes and new mind.

He saw more and more in the dark as his coder adjusted his skin conductance to reduce heat loss.

He saw the ankles were black from soot, and charcoal and burns, he saw his skin was dusky all over.

*Gaining wisdom was unerringly paid for by some loss, some pain, some suffering. This was law of the cosmos ,* Blax acknowledged. With any gain, something must be exhausted. *When one paid for the emotion they knew its quality at once ,* he thought as Wilde's idea rattled about in the head.

*The Amish have it right, they form their own culture, their own tribe. Blacks did this too, out of necessity, being excluded for so long.*

*And Asians and Jews look down on whites, he extrapolated, and there is no dismissing this fact. Asians and Jews often see whites as mongrels and feral and uncivilized. Barbarians. Not unlike the way whites looked down on blacks. The way the English looked down on his own people,* he thought. *Asian countries and Israel had strict race-based immigration and nobody said a word. Israel had blood tests to gain entry, Japan had minzoku,* he thought and felt his own fingertips wrinkle and feel raw.

He let his mind wander like this more and more as if too was exiled and pushed further from the center of him; whatever was in him at heart or head that had incessantly focuses on these plans *vis-à-vis* the west.

But this was taboo to say. All of it.

*The idea that it was innate for to people prefer their own kind; that to each race there was an endogenous valence that need not be explained nor justified,* he thought, *and yet, we had to pretend we were open to anything . This was the poison of America, the idea that anyone could be an American was the first sin that led from there to here,* Blax thought as he recalled his medicines -his drugs- were in the house that was razed. He felt a shudder, winded, he

panicked a bit. *And black women are harmed the most from this too; because they -black women- get passed over by black men dating white women purely for the status symbol* , he thought. *It's not the obvious consequences that matter most, sometimes it's the ancillary ones*, he thought some more and more and more as images of black women from his past filled his mind like dusky jeweled ghosts and six-fingered succubae and his heart hurt that he could not love them.

He felt aggrieved; he felt bad for others. He hated that he knew what they felt. And he knew they'd not want his pity. They'd hate him and rebuke his concern.

*And I shouldn't be thinking this way anyway* , he scolded himself now. Then he swung wildly again, thinking that he had raised his Jacks and could think whatever he wanted now; *I need not defend the ideas of the West*. He felt his eyes burn, and his chest compress. Here he was ruined, again, like *Job* , and still thinking of these big ideas. *Jesus, he had nothing, not even clothes* , he thought as he looked at his arms and waist and feet still in the muddy pond. The scars under the tattoos keloidal, raised like serpent mounds.

He then realized -with increased capacity for telling truth from lie- that he'd be able to judge individuals as individuals better now. It hit him all at once that mankind -and him especially- had had to make heuristic decisions on who was trust worthy and who was not. And one used race because it was 90% correct; and 100% easy. They segregated men by race in prison immediately. *Did mankind not see a metaphor in that? People were too overloaded with data, they didn't have the bandwidth to treat each person as an individual, one had to make categories -white man and black, safe or dubious- to survive. Man did not have the luxury of time.*

Because man was too stupid to judge each man individually, but smart enough to know categories worked more or less,



he had to live with these unarticulated but used heuristics; and everyone did it whilst everyone lied and said they didn't. Man was just barely smart enough to do what worked more or less.

"In a pinch, with a punch," he said.

Passages after passages from what seemed a random region, from Romanians, Albanians, the Balkans, poured over him from his coder, unbidden; he barely even looked. Maps of the area, words from *Thesus*, *Baccchylides*, water tables under the rocks all appeared in colors from infra-red to ultra-violet. It just washed over him as his own thought conjured up parallels and tangents and things oblique.

*The Scythians on the Black Sea and the Thracian are straight haired, for both they themselves and the envioning air are moist.* [Aristotle]

*Men make gods in their own image, those of the Ethiopian are black and snub-nosed, those of the Thracian have blue eyes and red hair.* [Xenophanes]

Those two quotes clacked as they typed out in his fore, as he thought of how to stop this information from coming and coming. He saw images of artwork all over the world and saw that some peoples -no matter how brown or squat, black headed, dark eyed- had white gods with red hair and tall frames, eyes blue like *foss*. *Not all gods*, he then thought, *were made in the image of the people, some people described who their gods actually had been, with no attempt to shoehorn them into their own image at all.*

"Because these giant white men weren't gods, they were mortal, ancestors, first peoples; and their history and their myths -facts and fiction- were mixed, and some of it was written down. Some carved, some built in mounds and some passed down in story and poetry and code," he said.

In a hundred origin myths the Celts, the Scythians, the Thracians and Dacians had been taller, fairer of skin and hair, and *barbaric* in the opinion of the merchant classes that won out. The barbarians were those that refused to go along with the commercial aims, the avarice, the materialism, the stupid banalities of progress. *And they always lost*, Blax thought. *They were always exiled. And that is why one saw the revanchist movements rise up from time to time. Even in the worst of men. Men independent even as it corrupted and made them monsters*, he thought in fragments.

*For who but monsters can fight against the whole fucking world?*

Ceaușescu had been a protochronist; he demanded that Romania been recognized -recognize itself in the mirror- as Dacian, home of the Dacian tribes -unified under *Burebista* - that had -as far back at the 4<sup>th</sup> century before Christ- lived in the Carpathian mountains, holed up in the *Orăștie* -in four fortified villages of *Costești*, *Blidaru*, *Piatra Roșie* and *Bănița* - between the *Danube*, *Dniester* and *Tisza*.

Even *La Tène Celts* brought technology of war to their Dacian brothers from further north and west; even they had a falling out.

Blax saw the R1b haplogroup again and again appearing like family photos, letters from war, artifacts -evidence- of mugshots of types of men like ragged lines of Boreal trees, pyramids of bottles with dried lees, manifold roots down to the limestone and fires and hearthstones with symbols of the Flood. But he couldn't process it all; it was too old, too far back, too many branches -feeder roots, brachial, Lichtenberg scars- that went on and on down to the bedrock of the Deluge. His mind saw the roots dig down and wide along a line like vineyard, rows and rows of the grapes made to suffer.

And he just couldn't take it any more. He stood in the draining lake and felt himself deluged with data.

*"Hecataeus of Miletus, Clement of Alexandria , for fuck's sake, the accounts of these red-headed step-children of man,"* he said aloud as the mind was clouded with dust of their chargers riding west from the steppe; down to the sea, up to the ice, pushing off from that Tahiti of the soul to further islands of autonomy and isolation to Vinland and New Zealand, Outer Hebrides and Hawaiki Polynesians, and his mind wanted to collapse like a spent star.

His hands ached to write this all down, but he had nothing left, no paper, no ink, the books like confetti rained down and he thought of the tattoos of the Dacians again, famous for marking the body, like the Scythians; and he rubbed his chin to imagine the *Tē Moko* that would go there if...

"If," he said aloud.

He looked at his feet but the water drained, it didn't flood. He thought of the ache in his heart for the written word but a quote populated his interface and crowded out everything else:

*Dacian script is a pure fabrication... purely and simply Dacian writing does not exist.*

It was a quote from *Sorin Olteanu* from *Vasile Pârvan* , and the warning to Thoth from the Pharaoh made book end to this idea of a religious taboo on writing among the Scythian diaspora.

The Albanians were next in his inner-list. And they claimed to be from the Illyrians up in the mountains and hills. The R1b again -the *continuity of the Albanians* , they called it in terms religious and bloodborne and going back to the watery part of the world- then he saw the J-M172 of the Caucasus mountains as a 3D image appeared and turned and modeled for Blax in his mind. He breathed out to purge

it from the brain as he hoped the blood would run to his lungs, he blinked to shoo these images away and away and away.

*Everyone, he thought of this obsession with race, blood, kinship, did it, and no one admitted it.*

*It was like babies being born at morn but everyone denying that the adults fucked at night.*

*Man couldn't reproduce without sex; as tawdry as it was made to be; and man couldn't survive without heuristic judgements on the trustworthy nature of their fellow man, Blax thought. Race was just easy, so easy it was the first - and fastest- thing a man used.* He too was tired and exhausted and didn't want to have to judge each particle in the air before he breathed, each fact from history about a thing he believed, each man on his merits from a life lived before and after these things.

"Tattoos mark you for identification, both the Russian and Japanese mafia use it for a reason, the cops and military use it for inspection, and that is no more or less information that melanin is to all of us," he said aloud. His knees began to wobble as his feet felt a pain under the water of the shallow puddle of the range. His jaw trembled just a bit. His eyes watered. His mouth filled with spit.

*Only the bourgeoisie had time to exclude race -or claim they did so anyway- from the calculus. The poor black on the factory floor had to judge his white co-workers and boss, chucks that had been -and thus would be- unreliable and likely to betray; the Prime Minister of Japan had to judge the Chinese for their millennia of perfidy and had to trust that these behavioral traits had mapped onto the slight racial differences between each Asian peoples that were apparent to any Japanese who stared long in the face of a Chink; and white boys in prison had to judge any blacks that came on*

*the tier; for in prison the white boy was the nigger, outnumbered and seen as prey.*

*In prison you're there a long time, but action happens all at once, he thought.*

*Dunbar's number dictated that man couldn't really know any more than 150 people. So what do you do in a society of millions? What do you do against a new tribe or people foreign to you; contact with men on boats or men ashore thus instantly increasing the number of people you must judge friendly or foe? You use the easiest thing first, you use what's most obvious, you pick up any bent piece of metal laying around to wield as a club. That which is obvious to the eyes: color of skin, hair, eyes.*

*Was it not vision that mapped onto morality? Blax then asked himself. Was it not light first from God? He barely heard, no it was the word.*

*Nobody is more racist than the Latin or South American, they use skin color more than any. Che Guevara said dark skinned mestizos and blacks were indolent and stupid. Mexicans treat one worse and worse the darker a Mexican gets; for it's seen as the stamp of lowly origin, he thought.*

*In England in the 1900's -if all people are one shade of white- then you use accent; in England they say class is branded on the tongue. Accent was how one told men apart. But in America race is most easily used. It's the only country -besides Mexico, or now western Europe- with such diversity of skin color. Japan is 98.6% ethnic Japanese: same skin and eye and hair colors. Until recently, all French were white, all British were white, all Mongols had the same color head, feet and hands; and all Chinese were Han. And so in countries with similar skin they use accent, class, or religion. Shit, he thought, there was no difference between Tutsi and Hutu, except they somehow knew.*

*How?*

*But the fact was that man had to tell people apart, quickly, in a pinch, roughly, unfairly, with almost no malice at all.*

*Because man didn't have the brain power to judge each man as an individual, no more than he could see each grain of hail, each stitch in a sail, or each fucking drop in the sea. If man was in a storm, he ran or he fought, but he didn't battle each drop. He avoided the whole sky, he piled on more sail, he condemned the ocean and the hail as one thing. He did not discern between each enemy.*

"Man did it with almost no malice at all," he said aloud.

*It was purely a function of cognitive bandwidth,* he surmised. He thought *purely*, but he knew -he softly reconsidered- that there was something below -or above- this mere physics, there was something of a flavor to what was functional. Man turned his primal needs for food and sex -and discerning friend from foe- into an artform. Man garnished his base needs with feelings. Man had culinary flare, sexual fetish, and a thousand and one reasons to hate someone for their skin, their accent, their barbarous ways.

"Man gilded a lily," he said quietly and thought of all that wine -his wine- vaporized in the blast. He saw math turn to art, instincts to feelings. Racism was made necessary by the math, but man made it into an artform by truly hating -with a garish and ornate lust- anyone -anything- different than him.

*And who is more rare than the sigma? Who has more people different from him than this 1% of mankind?* "Jesus, no wonder we hate everything so much," he said aloud.

But now -with the coder- with his -with their- ability to tell fact from fiction all in a moment, he had the luxury of judging each man as just that: a man. Well, until his rivals had coders too, then the arms race would be back to where

it was. *Liars and lie detection* , he thought. But he did think of this moment in history -despite the violence just done to him and his home- as the peace, the calm, the time between storms.

Here was a moment when he could be kind, decent, magnanimous to those that deserved it, all *isolatoes* , all men of all races and creeds who had basic decency. It would not last, but he had it now. He had caught it like that moment when Ahab had sank the harpoon but before he was tangled in the line.

*But the Jacks were already doing this , or beginning it* , he then thought -scuttling the metaphor of the Captain- as his mind tried to link up more dots out at arm's length. Blax then thought of how Jack Four thought -accused- Blax of thinking too big; too abstractly. *Although he hadn't come right out and said it, it was there to be seen in fragments and gaps, like a cypher, the cut-up novels of Burroughs*, Blax thought. He smiled at the idea that what most would call provincialism -white nationalism- Jack would call cosmopolitan. Jack Four had often bitched that 99% of whites, so-called brothers, were no better than any other race. He went along with their revanchist programs, he saw glory and *grandeur* in Occidental culture, but there was always this side-eye and the shake of the head that set him apart from the men.

*Jack Four was a mystery to all men* , he thought.

*And instead of narrowing down to further refine -like the other three Jacks- Jack Four reversed the lens, from microscope to telescope; near to far. They looked down at the blood, he looked up at the stars .*

The other Jacks thought Jack Four himself was too cosmopolitan as they wanted nothing to do with anyone outside their own genome -their own clones- men exactly like themselves down to the blue print; first principles. Yes,

they fought for the West, carried out Blax's plans, but not to mix with modern man. They did it to create a buffer, to prop up the edges, to police the borders of their own land.

*The same reason the Roman were in Spain, Gaul, Briton, he thought.*

*And they thought Jack was too liberal, Blax thought and found that his head shook at how weird this all was; how much more complex they were than him; how strange all four were; how their eyes seemed either coruscating or hooded and black. It was strange because they didn't rebuke Blax for his boosterism of the West, they just moved on without a word, as if their chauvinism made sense within the context of his grand designs. As if it needed no explanation at all. Only Jack Four rebelled, and yet he was between Blax and the Jacks, he was more open to larger schemes than the Jacks who had closed ranks completely after they left Lot 45. He couldn't quite make a theory of it yet. It was all data, and no story, just fragments -rambling thoughts- and no pattern yet at all.*

*Just four Jacks doing this and that , he thought as he watched more and more paper singed at the ends fall about him in an endless rain.*

It puzzled him. And this caused his mind to flex and contract and then expand.

"Swell," he said.

And the confusion caused something else to emerge, he saw the ground of his inner landscape rattle a bit, grains shift, shoots move up into the air. He thought there were other species of things inside him, things he'd built, *or was nest to, maybe ,* he then thought. He imagined he was in orbit around some other sun.

He then -all in a rush- wondered who had blown up his goddamn house.



Blax thought of all this other crap longer than he had suspected he would and now -like a wave collapse- began agitatedly wondering about the source of the blast he'd assumed was the work of the Governor and his mercenaries out in the forest.

"Fuck," he then said aloud.

His mind moved on -away from causality- to thinking of his men as men; as the black water and black trees that were lined by moonlight and thermal gain releasing as night closed in. He thought of their innate beauty, and strength and subtlety of vision, and desiderata. It was how he could see how much better they were than him, like a father sees his sons. It was a way to both humble and aggrandize the self. To make better versions than you is to brag in avatar; it's to show not yourself but what you can do, and assume -trust- that everyone will trace it back to you after all.

"History," he said.

His feet felt water logged now. The mud beneath them seemed to give way a bit; twist; auger down. His nerves returned to bother him as the black night air formed more and more apparitions and outlines of things familiar and opaque too.

He heard them -his Jacks of Christmas past- at night and at noon, wrestle with mule deer and themselves; one hand on the compendium of life, one hand up in the thick phlogiston of air like a man ordered by *Cressus* upon the centaur. *A man multiplying the twelve Labors by twelve until he's sore just from thinking of his duty, a man relaxed by the flame of a woman two-thirds his size, one half his depth, one third his burden; but never mere fraction of his worth,* he thought as if such fractions worked out in the end. He thought of the time Isaiah had shown him non-associative numbers, and how he had explained the fourth domain of integers -*the undiscovered country of God's signature*, Isaiah had said,

Blax now recalled- and he thought of how that might matter in ways even below the ways he already did not understand.

"Am I even dumber than I think?" he asked the air.

His mind built inner memories when the math confused him to the point of silence and blindness and a ringing in the ears. He saw Scyths and wineskins, traps laid, gold engraved, megaliths as preparation for what?

"For what?" he asked as comets fell like angels in this midnight sky. He imagined the ancients meeting and preparing not for themselves but the future; warning men ten thousand years in the future to watch the skies, for what Jupiter missed, for what would be needed when the lights went out, the kings in doubt, the books all soaked and washed out to sea.

He saw *Göbekli Tepe* entombed, the pyramids buried in sand, and the fishmen carrying bags. He read the myths and counted up the angels, the devils, the men allowed into *Valhalla* and the women that worked the mills.

He'd hold back blinking as he watched his inner visions of them being shown the monk's wines from parcels -*climats* - of one acre; he'd hold his breath as they'd see the signature of God upon the check they cashed each day. He prayed. He prayed in some language that made it seem not for God nor man but the hidden math.

He saw it all bend in a ball, a globe, an equation that solved itself like digestion.

*Things grew and were beautiful and were eaten and rotted on earth or in the belly*, he thought. And yet he thought nothing of her belly at all. It was sequestered, entombed too, held in the *Bastille* of his coder and so all he had was hints, wafts of air, rumors, vague analogies that seemed to slide toward the birth canal, the teat, the foundry of repeats. *How many times would God let this run?* he asked.

"They'd know their world first upon -then through- the boundary of the skin," he said to his own head.

The dark of the forest existed outside of their ring, like the celestial vault beyond the earth; they the gods' playthings; they'd think, *man is too haughty at times. Therefore, it is - and ought be said- that it's an honor to be chosen by the gods for gallant tragedies*, he thought as the air turned the skin cold further in and the jaw began to rattle; his lungs expelling like the Northumbrian smallpipes; his mouth the *chanter*; his nose the drone of the *burdon*. He tried to see the end of his life; this escape had been a lark, he knew that much. It was a warning of what was to come, God had given him his 5-minute warning.

He -he thought- hadn't escaped the real blast.

But he turned his thoughts back to his Jacks instead; he couldn't focus on the self.

*Their muscles would be sore from yesterday's training, their hair wet from it raining, a few hours previous to this time in the agoge to reflect. They smelled like men, like atavistic men.* He saw them the way men saw animals, he pulled back the gums to check the teeth, he pet their coats in his mind.

He didn't think of dogs eating their owners, or crows going first for the eyes.

Their knuckles were white and livid with scars, their oft-struck jaws clicked when they talked, all the more reason to demur when silence was the steady state of things. To break silence required a reason, *inertia in all things*, Blax had once said, and like most things, his words rang in their heads like the bells of *Leuven* struck pious commoners hurrying across the town square toward the spire. Each phrase rang like the clang of claymores in battles one had

survived on the *Dyle* by dint of the sermons from the dead that one hopefully hears in their ears when in the din of war.

Like God he assumed they'd be grateful for all the lesson he taught. "Lessons I never got," he said aloud as the -tawny, grey, white- mice of experiments ran mazes, and had mothers taken from them to see how many generations it took to return to normal.

"It was three," he said and thought of the way the scientists played God.

The darkness seemed like grip over the home's ruins, the flames he saw now remained from the gas leak, and like a derrick lit up as bright as a thousand blue eyes and with cabling as thick as a penitent family of femur bones, it was spouting up and to the west without bend. Only the collapsed container wall kept it from rising higher than it did. It looked like weld slag from joints being flanged or torch sparkings underneath 10-gauge steel being riven in half. He watched it like a fount of fire; like magma pouring into the sea.

"Like things cleaved," he said as his body pimples and shivered from loss of heat.

He just saw images and made up stories that attended.

He had a foundry of some kind in there that produced more and more raw iron & ferric blood and then masts were raised and ships launched and moons came and went in the folds of his CNS sea. He thought things and things appeared and his hands were black and bent in the morn. The sides of his head were shorn.

*This built* -he spoke subjunctively to himself and as if it was already done and done well- *this built a bond between men that modern men would never understand; as modern men paid for everything -not building nor taking it- and thus modern men paid with their souls . This modernity* - he said

trying to turn from where he too had lost soul, he thought of the Roman uniforms dyed red to hide blood in battle- *was making man and each of his mates expendable to the fungible dollar that could -by fiat- replace them with someone or something of equal remunerative value* . The tyranny innate to commerce was obvious to him and now to them; to his images of his men. He had showed them his hand. He had peeked at theirs. Their hands fanned out full of court-cards dressed in suits black and a blacker red.

*And red dye was most expensive of all*, he'd once said as he told them of battles in Gaul, of barbarians tall, of hordes of Romans that either won or lost it all. He told them of just what type of man was exiled from the cities, and why.

They began with his biases and started where he left off. He spun them and spun them and pointed them with his hands on their shoulders as they walked away.

He thought of craftsmanship and why efficiency led to honeycombs and hives, why survival demanded compromise. *Why*, he thought, *unique things must die*.

*A man is built one by one, not for efficiency, not for re-sale value.*

He was repeating Jack One's musings from years ago but thinking it was his original thought. He thought this and swatted at some insects he couldn't identify -winged and striped in black and grey- that flew about his face in the dark. He shifted his weight from leg to leg; foot to foot. Echolocation *via* the popping of the home's rubble on the pad and where it landed, the conflagration of the trees, the fluid in his head from the concussion, all made it seem like he used one ear at a time.

*But, today, with a demonic philosophy ruling the world, everyone is replaceable by the younger, faster, cheaper version just coming on-line. However, as in the argot of*

*mathematics, a primitive need not be further justified, it's axiomatic; a set is set and that is that . What was primitive in man was the math; the gene never died. It must hide, yes, but it was never dead.*

"One can stop and look no further down," he said in a mumble to rest the jaw and keep the air from the teeth. He worried as he described how things would be. He spoke their lives without him into existence. He couldn't stop himself. His thoughts were a flood, a great deluge, judgement from some god.

*The Jacks would live outside of this model,* he said inside his head as he dealt cards around in pairs, sets, four-to-one around the table, the slab, as score-cards lay to his right, *yet they knew whence they came.*

As Blax thought this it did not occur to him that for the Jacks to serve their purpose in this way -this midwifery of culture- they'd have to live forever, they could never pass on and fade away. The loss of history, connection, was the original sin. Death -thus the loss of connection to the past, memory- was thus exactly as it was laid out in *Genesis* : the first punishment. But Blax thought still like a modern man. He both exemplified and rebuked the *sui generis* . And yet he did not mind his own death and would think an endless life a pox if forced upon him by some trick; some curse.

*The Jacks,* he thought, *had been raised in the modern world; but the PraXis corporation had insisted on them being homeschooled* . The parents, when informed of that fact, had shown an admixture of the eager and dubious; but the first twenty-one of them had been so grateful to be pregnant and have help making sure their child survived that they agreed to it in the main without reservation.

The first twenty-one families had nodded and asked what they should do and what should be avoided. They held hands as Tania went to their homes and spoke to them or

brochures were stared at but not yet read. They spoke - husband and wife spoke- late at night of how their child would come out. The corporation would help them, but after Tania had left each time, each set of parents would be left all alone with their decision and decisions to come.

Fertility is still treated as the realm of the gods among those for whom it's denied. May poles are rung, birds are prayed to in small churches of *Iona* , and whispers are made to the egg and the womb.

"Prayers," Blax said as he held his left hand in his right. Blax thought, *most people who aren't fathers, parents, don't know that you don't merely imagine your child but you imagine the world he grows up in too; your fantasies and worries include the milieu.*

The corporation had -and had bragged about having- *the resources to help* , he remembered reading in 2020, *with the education of each of the twenty-one boys.* He now recalled waking up at home and naming his parts, touching each limb, the lips, and licking the teeth thinking -believing- he'd feel a slick bronze on the left eyetooth, see a scar from the eye to the jaw in the looking glass. He remembered that day both as one of many, and too as one of one. He remembered naming each thing; like the first couple in the garden had been instructed to do.

"Should I listen to my conscience or Isaiah?" he asked in a blurt he was certain someone would hear.

The Jacks had been at what they now semi-secretly called, *Domaine Jacques Noire* for just passed thirty-six months, but they were spending more and more time in the sections of their forest that they had each claimed for their next project: their homes. *Their tribe* , Blax thought, expanding his original thought.

They had each put on nineteen pounds of muscle, and lost two pounds of fat, and now weighed in at 199lbs even. Their hair was cut short, and their faces shaved clean, and each was healing from this or that wound.

They had spoken of these things, each in their own way; they had shook hands each morning and saluted Blax at close of day as they attempted a balance between tribe and the self. He saw them struggle with things he had wrestled too.

It was a blend of not dissimilar things, and this made it harder and easier at once. They shared genomes -and all but one- shared the parasitic TOXO organism latent in their brains, and they thus shared both left and right hemispheric personality types; innate levels of aggression and native intelligence, and body type. They were host to no fat insulin receptor genes. And thus they never had in fuel in the tank, but only the intake manifold.

Their bodies were the equivalent of *spenders*, whereas fat people were, *savers*, and thus the Jacks -like Blax- spent each calorie they took in. *Metabolically such profligate phenomenon was seen as a sign of health -one was thin- and yet economically it -spending money incessantly- was perceived as a sign of immaturity*, Blax thought as he tried to make sense of what worked in each domain.

"In a matter of hours," he said -of something- even though the jaw and the lips were now stiff and the pain had moved like a spider from the egg of acute to ache of birth and the movement made it seem like the body was building webs in the gaps and corners and between ends of his bones.

*It's why thin people were more industrious than fat people; they had to be*, he thought.

Like the squandering spenders of cash, they had to always make more and more to survive. *A fat guy can rest on his*



*ass, because he's saved up 10-20% of each meal for the future and need not work nearly as hard. It was evolution at work; men with the fat-insulin receptor gene need not work as hard. This was why fat people were lazy, they had been allowed to be by evolution. Skinny guys, guys who could not put on weight, had better be hard charging each day, or they'd sure as shit starve to death .* The personality was linked to something as simple as one gene and Blax thought of how few people -fat and thin alike- knew who and what they were.

His heart sped up on orders from the brain, itself twitching at his hypocrisy and giant strides -leaps- in causality.

*But,* he quickly thought, as he used words to stave off the doubt, endless chattering to keep a lid on the demon, *the Jack genome itself was heavily bifurcated and contained innate contradictions; that was the irony of course .* Blax, and the Jacks were all conscientious, ordered and industrious in extreme; but they were also temporarily chaotic like a flash flood or forest fire, or an avalanche in the spring; and they were high in trait openness. They let things in, they allowed things to escape their mouths. They could be devil-may-care and reckless in ways usually only seen in condemned men, or those otherwise with nothing to lose.

Sometimes they had no borders, boundaries, walls at all. Each Jack connected from Jack to Jack to Jack. He thought this as his nervous tongue widened under each set of molars -top and bottom- and it felt a crenulated wall -one defense- from back to front. His did this to be able to bite without breaking his teeth.

*And yet,* he went on as the house flew, settled, tumbled further apart, *they had a neuroticism that would make a grandmother from the levant wrinkle her brow, widen the eyes, and mock their incessant apprehension .* Their worrying over details only a madman would even notice

would consume them at times. They -each natural introverts- could spend days -weeks- alone without loneliness but would gregariously speak to each other as if their school-girl chattering was available at the flip of a switch.

And more often than not they would demonstrate an agreeableness that bordered on insouciance, as if they trusted the whole world to look out for their interests. Consequential issues of personal gain would be dismissed as the purview of the gods -or their fellow man- and thus any warnings to be tougher would be waved away with a *blasé* hand. They seemed to not give one fuck about how negotiations or contracts or deals made with rivals might turn out in the end.

And just as easily -as if from behind a fast-moving cloud came the appearance of an osprey at terminal velocity- the intractable and unyielding and obstinate horridness would plant flag and dig grave and commit to dying on any of a thousand seemingly flat hills six feet below the level of the sea. Small details in color, movement, sound, fractions of an inch or *avoirdupois*, half-ounces or quarter lumens -that reduced inversely to the square root of one- would become of supreme importance to each of them in their turn, and they would delineate the issue, no matter how minute, for as much time as any other man could bear.

*Those fuckers would argue over anything once so inclined* , he thought. His fingers lay together on each hand; the toes touched under the water; the air so still each hair organized side by side upon his head.

To drive their tracks across the land they could each wear down the other's soul like a great range of continental mountains reduced to a dip in the road with an incessant wind of earnest -nearly plaintive- wails and the *Thoric* hammering of points into blunt heads of long buried railroad

spike and dead equine. They each could conquer by an attrition as long as a Chinese empire or yield before -as quickly as- the first shots were fired between two southern men in a duel over one Appalachian woman.

It was a strategy that appeared as no strategy at all.

They each contained equal measure of all five traits; and so to say that they were the same -as if this meant it was easy for them to agree or work together- was like saying all the caterpillar's legs were the same, or that all DNA in one's body was identically so-made, or that all pieces to a puzzle were the equal in thickness and had the same goal to be made whole in the end. *It was true, but it was all more complicated than these facts might seem*, Blax thought.

"The way you do one thing is the way you do all things," he said as if that settled it all.

*And once they, Blax thought, realized what non-linear manifestations they could render, there was almost no way to tear them asunder. One plus One plus One plus One did not equal four.*

"And adding me did not make five," he said as his feet now had gone a kind of numb where he could still stand but not move.

Together they felt exponentially larger, and from the first multiplication of one by another, there are on ly six root-doubling to 4.29 billion, they quite clearly saw. Blax saw what they saw, he saw numbers populate as if emerging from a tear in a shell, from themselves like integer twins. He often pretended to understand them, but he had no facility with numbers, math was as opaque to him as biology was to modern man. Modern man lived in the home or open air of the philosopher, Blax lived in the cave, the den of the animal, but it was only God who made a kind of nest of the math.

The stars winked behind the blur, the swatch, the ghost of smoke; he blinked and drew no lines, made no constellation in the mind.

"I wonder if Jack?" he asked aloud but he felt the cold air on his teeth and the pain made him wince; he shut up at once and held his breath. He recalled the many shattering of teeth, the breaking of jaw -over many years- and then the two visits to the dentist to repair it all later in life. His teeth now were so white -an unnatural lack of stain for his age- and so straight and unfissured, only the memory of pain -these moments of dark sensitivity- remained.

They all had this intuitive feeling, unexpressed frequently, expressed inelegantly more often, that they were one man away from that number to match the years the earth had been around. As five men, integers, they were stuck at a doubling to a mere 65,536. Yes, that number was powerful and beyond the mere four or five of their linear integers, but they could feel that 4.29 billion sum like any emergent property: it hung there like the central nervous system, or the immune system, maybe the opposable thumb, or consciousness itself -lifting off of the brain- may have tantalizingly appeared to God before he made it -or allowed it to- manifest into the world.

Blax did not know it, but Jack Four often bent Aspen's in the forest; shaped like ribs to a mechanical beast, something he could revivify when the storms came. And Jack Three painted the containers with scenes of travails, he too thought a motion picture could be made -sprung to life- and all twelve of the labors would collapse into one frame, one man, one additional man for them to make six and double to their sought after billions. Jack Two invested each moment into love and sister-vigilance, the suspicious trip around the heart like the automata of *Vitruvius* on display each hour and hidden in the body of the clock or in the *kimono* of the

*karakuri -dokei* like tea in the dark stomach and the breath hidden safely in bright blood.

"Jack One," Blax said and thought of the anger, the violence, the thrust of each sharp thing into the void Jack saw in each thing; as if to cut into something was to -in fact- sheath. Mere murder was forbearance to Jack, and moments of peace were merely rancor disguised like the refusal of a father to intervene to protect his son. *Peace by me would be just -merely- letting others war*, Jack One had said one night and Blax had felt the air reach the air between vertebrae of his spine. *Was not each living being killing a million to one by being alive?* Jack would ask. *Did not the killing of elk or Eskimos increase total life for the world?* "Did not a million things die to keep one man alive? Did not millions -billions- of things come forth from the carcass of one dead bear or dumb bastard we dispatch?" Jack had once asked with a fork stuck into his meal, wine dripping from the edges of a mouth that seemed wider each time he ate his fill.

The forest fed a dozen black bird and four *yotes*, on one departed bear left to bleed out. A thousand flies and a million maggots, and a billion and a half microbes would feast on the one large complex beast. *Jack had the math right*, Blax thought, *but my God*.

JO made Blax awake to sounds at one time he'd have ignored while he dreamed.

He stood still and watched.

He recalled that they would play games by each memorizing the word in a poem that corresponded with their number; so Jack One would take the first word and Jack Two the second and so on. This would repeat so that then Jack One took the fifth and Jack Two the sixth, and they'd each say their words in succession. A poem of forty words could be said by each of them memorizing ten words and lacing them together in turn. It was fun, and they learned everything from the *Iliad*

to King Lear and Lord Byron and Milton and Cafrey and Poe. And they did it so rapidly the listener would just hear it as if said by one man from four locations; four cardinal directions on earth. An echolocation phenomenon would build in the listener and the Jacks both. Often the dogs would whine; the wind would die down; Blax would subconsciously hold his breath.

Jack One would say, "Prophet," and the others would bark out their lines in order,

"Said," Jack Two blurted.

"I," Jack Three recounted.

"thing," Jack Four rejoined.

"of," Jack One quickly bleated.

"evil," Jack Two following again.

They did this until you could hear it all ...*as bird or devil yourself and whether tempter sent or tempest tossed thee here ashore* , as one thing, reporting from sides of the compound; one Jack in the courtyard hammering steel stock on the anvil, and one lifting weights to his east, one in the kitchen with garage door open, and one walking the perimeter at parts not too far way.

It was sonorous if a bit auditorily hallucinatory, like being swarmed by ghosts, apparitions, the gods of the written word attacking from all sides.

Blax enjoyed it and found the ways they harnessed their collective power fascinating. He told himself he likely never would have even imagined doing such thing. They tried to include him in their games, making it a five-man construction, but he demurred and told them to hone it amongst themselves; for he seemed, *a bit of a fifth wheel to a wagon, eh?* he'd say with a smile they always -out of kindness- returned.

He used lines like that so often that they began to play tricks on him; and include him; press him into service for their games. He would say some line from the canon and they'd say the next line as a group, each taking the words in turn as usual.

It was disorienting and yet amusing to such a degree that Blax actually laughed out loud when after claiming for himself to *be neither house dog nor kennel dog*, the boys each took a word in succession to read off the next line from Call of the Wild. They'd say each take one word in turn, "*the whole realm was,*" and then -taking turns- one of them would add, "*His*" to conclude in a laugh. Their farthest teeth back got some air and sunlight touched on the flanks of that oft-hidden dentine; they revealed their teeth in guffaws like this.

He felt guilt at times, for enjoying their company so much, but banished the feeling as it rose. *They could be never less alone than when alone*, he thought. They were a group of one man; one man as a multitude.

"Self manifold," he'd once said. "The rugged individualist, split," he whispered sometimes.

*Trying to find bottom for life's phenomena is good exercise, but you won't catch dinner that way*, Blax used to say to admonish them.

Some men could see equality-of-outcome in economics was dangerous but missed it in other domains; like sex and politics. Blax saw all three. *And the root evil of democracy laid there at bottom of all man's worst constructions*, he'd think -and say- many times even as they worked and hurt, bent and bled, risked jail and death to preserve the West.

"Your religion is what you did," he'd say, "not what you said."

Blax never took seriously this contradiction; how it would seem to the Jacks. He barely noticed when they observed how far apart were his deeds and words; how he said the West was lost and yet here he was propping it up.

He looked at his Jacks in his mind's eye, laying about the fire for some deserved R&R and he knew that with their innate moral standards combined with their unbent magnetism, and the resources they'd have at their disposal, that they could lead that next cultural revolution toward sexual spotlessness and the model of restoration of man as paragon of virtue not tyranny, and woman as model of purity not power, and from there the sequela of all the complexity of modernity would be healed. He saw his own body reforming once the pressure of the compression fracture at C5 and C6 was healed, he saw the shoulders and head and the hips all align too. He saw his own gait straighten out; his own limps go away.

It was vague but he thought too his dark thoughts might lighten along with the rest of his load.

*It was difficult to articulate to a culture obsessed with choices and freedom ; but if you could show them a new way, a different model, and that it worked, and was viable, and enjoyable, and resonant with their core, he felt, the old commercial -and Apollonian- model could be abandoned; not overthrown. One must lead by example, not force it on people; for if it's truly the right way, they will come to it in time.*

*What would be forced, would be the numbers, the numbers of men leading the way. That was the only cheat in the game, beginning with 1,600,000 natural men, who could be the change first, and had a terroir to offer, a real place -not a virtual one- that people ... he stopped thinking now. He tried not to go too far afield.*



It was not that he was some pacifist or hippy; if forced worked he'd use it. *And in many things force does work*, he thought, *but not in cultural change. That is soft power, hard power is held in reserve for hard problems, problems between enemies and nature not issues between and amongst friends.*

The Argentine ant was like this, they *never* fought internally, and *always* fought externally, it was the closest thing to a paradigm for his vision as he could touch in the natural world. He had Argentine ants in a large aquarium he had built off to the side of the garage container and he knew they were likely blown all over the forest now. The idea for these ant-farms just appeared in him one day; as did the knowledge of their idiosyncratic customs and behaviors.

He had epiphanies, he thought. He thought things just occurred to him out of the blue. He saw ants in his mind, his arms itched, and he looked down and saw ash and other bits aloft on the tops of his hairs like snow.

But the men, and they were men now -temperamentally mature, and while chronologically only eighteen years old, metabolically they were twenty-five to thirty and would live to five-hundred or longer he assumed- but the men could no longer be kept from themselves. Their bodies yearned desperately for a woman, *a special woman, or many average ones*, he quipped to himself recalling the Bill Hicks joke. But he had schooled them on this delicate dance, and how crucial it was to do that one thing right in a man's life. *He*, he had warned them, *had squandered it, largely out of ignorance, as his own father had been of no use in this or any regard when it came to philosophy or how to live in the world* . His own father had been philosophically *laissez-faire* juxtaposed with autocratic injunction; there was no rationale for anything, just Old Testament rules to be obeyed. *Or more likely, rules to be ignored due to lack of omniscience or*

*enforcement*, Blax thought. He thought it was metaphor for the way God now seemed to look away from his children and throw up His hands.

He thought again -for an iteration of a high but unknown integer- of how his father had no father. Life was ahistorical in every way in their untethered clan. He knew it mattered; but he didn't know how. He had ideas, instincts, clues, but no concrete answer for why it mattered that a man knew where he came from.

Blax was heavy on philosophy, always explaining the *why* and the *how* to achieve something, making the Jacks debate the good life, designing their own lives this way *via* dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. He'd tell them they were free to leave *Lot 45* to chase girls if they wanted, but that they would be replaced if they chose this path. *What they were doing*, he would lecture them, *was too important and time-sensitive for them to delay or derail it with the frivolity of females right now.*

*Not*, he would add, *that females are frivolous*, as even he shrugged and half rolled the eyes at what was obvious hypocrisy. He wondered why he never shut up; why he had to have an opinion on everything. But they listened and so he went on and on.

*Men forgive all except sexual congress*, he'd then say. *One of the many ways in which the sexes are opposite*, he would state as he kicked rocks and used his head to follow birds in the sky. They would watch not the ground or the air but his eyes.

*Learn this*, he'd say, *stuff it into any empty space within you; this will be the single greatest set of facts you will thank me for later in life. Keep your own sexual dalliances to a minimum, just enough to learn how to fuck, and be kind and show leadership; and never marry unless it's to a virgin, many years your junior, and you know it is for life. Because*

*if it ends you'll never have one again. Divorce is death, regardless of it being legal and no longer taboo. It's death for a man and woman, neither one will ever be happy again. And not just happy, but useful, you'll never be useful again; not in that way. The only option for you will be this, he would say and roll the hands like a devilish offering; and look around as if his home was a prison, a fate, a consequence of his errors in life.*

*You fuck it up and you'll have to build a fortified compound and teach young men how not to be you for the rest of your life, he'd say and smile at the obvious self-critique.*

*He would then say, my dad knew nothing about life. Which, in his defense, was better than his dad, who had abandoned him at birth, and my father's mother was a whore and so, my father just being around and providing was 100% more than he had model for. So, I don't say this with malice, but he didn't know why or how I should act, he had no training or data or erudition at all. He was a redneck from Arkansas, he was starting from zero. And that is the hardest thing in nature, starting from zero.*

*"I began from one, and you -doubled- will begin at two," he said aloud as repeat of the memory and again now for some reason. The clouds had made forms and looked like continents might; the sky sparkled like a kind of iron and pyrite.*

*So, I refuse to allow anyone, myself included, to rebuke him for merely getting me born and clothed and educated and on towards my own path. Without him starting me at one, I never could have reached, well, wherever I am today. And you guys are starting out at two, which accelerates you beyond me in about , he'd say this and then he'd look at his watch -timing their surpassing him in mere seconds- in truth but in jest and they'd all get the joke and smile and now too look at the rocks or up to the redtail hawks or crows with*

beaks like black hooks and wings like a display of dark swords and tanto knives in a row.

"We'll all have jobs to do; he did his," he'd said.

*So, there is a difference in, between, he corrected, between analysis and rebuke. I am not rebuking my father for his ignorance and lack of will to teach me how to be a man. In some ways, it was better for me to have to learn on my own. But, it was ok only because he had no model of his own and had to make it up as he went along himself.*

*It would be unacceptable for me to have all my knowledge and not impress it upon you; because I know what will make you happy, -no, I know what will devastate you and make you unable to stand life ever again- he said in amendment. I know it. And if you are unhappy and feel maligned and abandoned by God and man alike, you will be vengeful and dangerous; and too dangerous to abide, he had said.*

And there was an implicit threat there, laid there like Chekov's revolver in this approaching third act.

Blax would stop sometimes and collect himself, and they could see the effects of whatever storms he had weathered revealed in the quiet, when the mouth stopped moving and the face was still, while this hull was in anchorage now - embayed in clear weather- they saw the torn sails and rent taffrails, stove boats and split yardarms, and maybe even a lumbering tilt to the Captain himself. They shifted in their skins as if watching some future self, mauled by the great fish or out on some leash from a vexed god or two.

And then Jack realized why he never stopped, never ceased speaking, thinking, jamming and piling up more and more sail. To stop was to feel; to go quiet was to allow the hold to flood; to refuse to figure out why was to die.

The other three did not pity him; for he would have found that outrageous; he and they agreed only that they learn.

He had once said, *think of me as an avatar in your head of how you do and do not want to be; like when you imagine yourself doing this or that; and thus conjure it up in your mind. Well, I am you, and I've lived certain ways, and I can tell you what works for our kind and what does not. It's not an exact science, but man, it's close.*

*When I tell you not to do something I ain't joking around. I have the limps, the bad back and the neck that only turns half way; the jaw that locks open and closed; the scars, the memories like roommates who never pay rent. I have the loneliness and trail of enmity and alienation as far down as the south pole and as far back as the first outward bound journey of the HMS Beagle herself , he would say half smirking to take the sting out of the self-pity, maybe lighten the darkness from the warning itself.*

*It's of no use for me to have learned the hard way -and brought you all here to learn it- if you aren't going to learn it from me. And I know people will say, well, sometimes you gotta learn it yourself. Well, goddammit you did learn it yourself, who the fuck do you think I am if not you? he'd say; not ask.*

He would bellow it. It would get quiet; their eyeballs would squeak if they moved.

This was his salvation, the way to redeem himself for a life epic -envied, emulated- but ultimately a failure. He was a super nova, an endless explosion; chaos made shimmering that warmed those at the safe edge of the star system. *But ultimately he was a failure* , he thought more and more as the moons moved and the sun rose and the earth grew green and shrank down brown and then froze itself into a permanent white.

And so the thoughts rattled around inside like a bullet fired inside a bunker. He would see them shift or stolid, chatty or

quiet, in work or at rest and forget how often he'd say the same shit over and over within his own head.

He remembered feeling that way growing up; respectful of adults. He was not always so contemptuous of people; not always thinking them hypocrites and liars. *Right?* he asked himself. He had often looked up to many folks. He had almost forgotten that, until these boys reminded him of his capacity for respect for one's elders. They reminded him of his capacity for awe. The hairs on his arms stood up, as he thought this. *A consilience of body and mind and some nebulous metaphysics*, he thought as it crashed upon him in waves and waves of ideas that repeated like tides as his feet burrowed into the range's silt, mud, brass of spent casings and stripper clips, glass, worm castings, feathers and bone.

"How far I am from home?" he would ask aloud sometimes.

He would pretend he was asking himself, but he hoped the Jacks would answer one day. They had learned to ignore his rhetorical questions, he made them nervous because they knew -but would not say- that he was going insane. When intelligent people go insane it can appear like something else. Smart men can hide their breakdowns for much longer based purely on how articulate they can seem.

Cogent speech can mask a disordered mind, and a soul wrought up beyond ever being repaired.

He had changed so much phenotypically, but genotypically he was the same as them. He could teach them best; this much he knew. *Yes*, he thought. They'd learn it from him or they'd never learn it. *That I know*, he said to himself. *No one else combined this Dorian, Aeolian, Achaean, Ionian amalgam with the power of mind to hold the delicate chisel and heavy arm to drop the hammer.*

“And again,” he would say again as they practiced their forms, and as they made strikes at each other to defend. He would explain how the planted foot had to be 180-degrees turned from the point of attack. He’d hold their feet down until they understood -in the body- how the kick’s power came from the ground.

“The heel must face the enemy, all your power comes from that technique,” he’d said and then bark for them to do it again. He said things until the words felt like weather, the need to evacuate, the rise of the sun: endless, inevitable, never going to take a day off. He monitored their pain, their exhaustion, their muscle growth and neural connectivity, all but the way they side-eyed him at times, all but the way they wanted to murder him when they got the most worn down. But he ignored it and they belayed it and it passed like a bird, a cloud, a blood moon.

He told them stories; and it was those stories they remembered for good and for ill.

He’d think of Isaiah and all those facts that he knew; and how he -Blax- would wake up some days and have things in the brain that were not there before. He’d stare at them and for a second wonder if they were true. “Just because they’re in my head, are they true?” he would ask aloud as he stared at his face in the mirror and raise the lip in a forced and inelegant smile and lament -again- the lack of the bronze tooth.

He felt pain at the elbows, and the jaw, and cold still; but now at his core. The house still was in ruins, the night was still black and green at the edge as the effluvium distorted the light.

Blax’s reverie melted away and the times he was re-living just then -its conceits- seemed to fold up inside him like wings, like eye teeth covered by lips, the wolf hidden inside mere dog. He stood there in the dark in the outer edge of

the ring of the whole razed and burned compound. He laughed now although it was stopped short by an acute pain in the ribs. *I've broke more ribs than most people break promises* , he thought and did not even smile. The coder - finished with the repair of the brain- began sending *bots* to do the fusing of the fractures in two ribs on his right side; releasing another 50mg of morphine as well.

He had ruminated so long on this stuff that his body was nearly dry from his time in the muddy pond. The whole house was still engulfed in low flames to his fore, the black paper floated on the thermals like the corvids, and the heat warmed his belly and shins. He walked around the make-shift lake now, toward the outcropping of slip rock and scrub oak that formed a prow on this 35-acre ship that was his land. He stood there naked except his normal *accoutrement* of hubris and awe in the face of nature's god; he breathed deeply; he let his mind wander to the land as he looked out over the millions of trees in the distance, not one building or tower or road or any human construction drew his eye.

Once again, he was the only standing construction or machine.

His PGC update had been successful, and he could see -as dark descended from blue to slate grey and a line of white at the horizon- the FLIR images from the AWACKS above showing the four men, now five, running away to the south from the compound. He saw one man remain inert and facing the him and oriented toward the home, to what used to be standing and of ambient temperature and still intact.

He saw one man looked back.

But Blax turned and focused instead on the New Mexico wolves ninety meters to his east, which with his UV/IR vision capabilities he could watch as they pawed at the ground, as the betas nipped at the omega's legs and the alpha wolf - with its black legs and roan coat, taller by four inches and



wider by two- stood on the edge of some sliprock of red and black. His belly was empty as his pack's were still half full. He had eaten less and digested faster from their last hunt. And the roan wolf keenly looked toward the man-beast they had kept track of for years now.

The wolves knew something was strange, the two-legged wolf didn't eat grass like the elk, yet never attacked like the wolf or the cat.

*Did the two-legged wolf eat of the sun, digest his own tail?* the wolf felt not in words but in pure wonder.

He -this upright wolf- merely pointed at prey and they fell and the wolves noticed it like the way the wind blew over trees. The alpha wolf knew something was different about the wolf of two-legs; weakness was sniffed out. And he was hungry and this made him more aggressive than the pack who still played and argued behind him in the bush. His eyes didn't blink; his mouth remained closed; his heart beat slow.

Blax felt warmth in his chest, he didn't smile but he warmed at their perfection as more shit butted in:

*The dubious death of Vasile Milea, Ceausescu's defense minister, a suicide -as he had attempted to incapacitate himself with a non-lethal shot to the arm but had accidentally severed the brachial artery- was announced by the media so that when the escaping Ceausescu's helicopter lifted off on the 22<sup>nd</sup> the Army had turned on him and his wife. The rank and file believed the defense minister had been murdered, and this was finally enough for them to seize the dictator and side with the rebellion. A lie had finally revealed a truth.*

*By Christmas day, 1989 the Ceausescu's were shot by the revolution; on January 7<sup>th</sup> capital punishment was outlawed in Romania.*

*The two births of Christ: the 25<sup>th</sup> of the west and the orthodox church's 7<sup>th</sup> . The ending of tyranny through death and the ending of killing through reprieve.*

*But, it took a mistake for the truth to finally be believed.*  
[Isaiah's notebook XXIII]

And with his calloused feet, a metabolic system self-contained -needing no inputs of sugar or protein or vitamins or micronutrients for three days- and a circulatory system capable of providing the CNS with oxygen for ninety minutes upon one breath, and a *limbic* system -what he still like to call, *his heart* - no longer concerned with outside approval, he ignored the men running away -he banished thoughts of all his so-oft named foes, all those he kept track of- and instead he walked towards the feral lupines in the dark.

# 0. Barbarism

Barbarism is the natural state of mankind. Civilization is unnatural. It is a whim of circumstance. And barbarism must always ultimately triumph

Beyond the Black River [Howard, Robert E]

What deep torture may be called a Hell, when more is felt than hath power to tell

The Rape of *Lucrece* [Shakespeare, William]

As soon as you have to pay for an emotion you will know its quality

*De Profundis* [Wilde, Oscar]

## **I. 2018 e.v.**

“We live our lives in the most ordinary meso-scale phenomena, we don’t see the quantum because we’re not playing with polarized lenses that show us what light actually is,” Eric Weinstein said into the lab as MO listened; eavesdropped. The numbers ran down like water on glass, outgassing like vapor made from heat, stable as crystals building out in Mandelbrot time.

MO heard and thought at once:

*An eight-dimensional number system that no one understands .*

MO ran each type of number along a 2D graph. The plane was grey and the numbers black and MO held his left hand on the slab as his fingers carved small scars into the concrete with headers of the four number types above each column.

*Real*

*Complex*

## *Quaternions*

## *Octonions*

"It's empowering to know we are a hair's breadth from super powers," Weinstein said. "So, for example there's the quaternions based on the number one, the complex number I, and then J and K. So I times J equals K. J times K equals I. J times I is equal to the negative of the I times J; so negative K.

"These help with computer vision. Computer simulation of 3D. They may come up in nature. We know nature uses complex numbers. But they never got to the point where you're actually looking at wave functions," he said.

"And they're not even associative.

"Associativity in math is ubiquitous. But not the octonions. So, these things that occur anomalously, but work, and are foundational for life, and yet we don't understand at all. This is a genuine mystery. That's an invitation off the planet. It's a portal. You build from each level. From real numbers you get complex, from complex you get quaternions, and from that the octonions arrive. But each time you gain this new realm you give up some intuitive property. You give up properties that make sense. You lose ability to understand, but it's real in mathematics.

"I'm not going to say it's God," Weinstein said as MO kept his hand on the grey slab; the pad to his forefinger sharp like scalpel, like scaring -scoring- tool.

MO allowed the four system of numbers to build both under the level above it -wide and deep- and above it tall and ornate. *They may not be associative*, MO thought, *but they are power-associative*. On the slab he then carved:

$$x(x(xx)) = (x(xx))x = (xx)(xx)$$

MO released the number generator -a *Fibonacci* style generator; not truly random- for each of the four number systems now on expanding planes, sets which grew down

like roots and up like boughs and numbers flew to them like birds, [redacted]'s landing on the  $e_1 = I$ ; [redacted] like squirrel burrowing into the  $e_5 = IL$ . He saw trees of octonions grow and attract flora and fauna as he retracted his inner vision back so that now a forest grew and from that the power law emerged. He saw one octonion tree on a grid behaved as ten, as did one hundred as did ten thousand as did a hundred million now. Light came apart on the inner *tableaux* ; quantum waves appeared like search lights made of sea water; particles appeared with reflections of the radical of negative one bending convexly then concavely and then popping like bubbles of integer soap.

A *Fano* plane was carved into the slab. A series of digits followed.

He ignored it.

*Cohl Furey had constructed a model of octonions and she lay the strong and electromagnetic forces upon it like meat on the frame of a sea beast* , MO thought as he saw -and as he deconstructed- her work. MO ran the models on an expanding sphere with continents of land for each set, oceans of integers reduced to *sine* curve and irrational numbers and particles and waves. Footnotes populated, theorems breathed once then evaporated, articles appeared on the cloud:

*$SU(3)$ ,  $SU(2)$  and  $U(1)$  correspond to the strong, weak and electromagnetic forces and they act on six types of quarks, two types of leptons, plus their anti-particles with each type of particle coming in three copies or generations that are identical except for their masses. The forth fundamental force, gravity, is described separately, and incompatibly, by general relativity, which casts it as curves in the geometry of space-time .*  
[Quanta magazine. July 2018]



MO built another 64-dimensional model as moon to his expanding earth below it, his mind allowed light to shine from five-hundred seconds away. He allowed particles to remain mathematical ideals, considering them elements of sub-space and permitted to endure there by not his hold but *via* the three foundational forces of life. Gravity -in his mind- held no sway, yet.

*This permitted particles to stay as particles even as they ambulate and exchange and cooperate and transmute* , he thought. These are the particles of nature and they manifest the symmetries of the four types of numbers themselves.

"1,  $e_1$  ,  $e_8$  ,  $e_4$  ,  $e_3$  ,  $e_6$  ,  $e_5$  ,  $e_7$  ,  $e_2$  ," MO said -vague constructions of firing order of simple internal-combustion machines shadowed his thoughts- and he loaded the numbers under G2 on the thin layer of his *neo-cortex* , right over the *dmPFC* which he had built from irrational numbers held together like a ballet dancer turning the head in 180-degree snaps as the body rotated -fluidly- below.

*Electrical charge appears in discrete units, as whole numbers* , MO ruminated. Now he focused on the three generations of particles that exist in nature. He built them up and out and on a template of four diamonds. *It's been 174 years since the octonions discovered*, MO thought. *And no use for them in nature has been found.*

## **II. 2040 e.v.**

"Yes, the body, goddammit," Jack Four said.

"Well, I can't do it," Isaiah said.

"Why the fuck not?" Jack asked.

"Look, for the third time now, you and your *Wolves* will have to do it yourselves if you think it's so fucking important. Jack, you've caused enough problems for me and for MO,"

Isaiah said as he clicked off his DM's and laid his hand on the diesel engine's exposed heads and the rocker-arms bronzed and blued and covered in a thin film of amber heavy-weight oil.

Isaiah breathed. He thought of the number of breathes in a life; of mouse, moth, man, and himself.

He counted the Jacks, the clones and their atoms, organs and motions like each bar of gold in the vault, each book, all art; the marbles, the baubles, the bottles of wine drop by drop, vintage by vintage; and then exploded and collided each item in his mind one more time.

"Sunken ship make reefs," he said. *But they don't make wooden ships anymore*, he thought as he pondered their habitat.

*Lyngvi* pushed the conversation from his mind. Each time Isaiah called him *Jack* it was like a pull toward the past. He liked thinking of him -Isaiah- so far away in the lab; himself in the ocean. He still got sick at sea, but further down he felt fine; just from ship to surface of the sea was the part that made him puke and feel like death.

Down here he felt just fine.

He held the breath and raised slightly from the seabed; weightless -his lungs like ballast- and then expelled it and sank.

The sea water turned cold like a river running under him that he now descended into at 60 feet.

The DM with Isaiah had allowed electricity in *Lyngvi's* brain to spiderweb and warm connection and radiate throughout the brain until Jack could sequester the coder with cold water, copper flakes and the new *xyzolphiles* that had burrowed into the giant Cypress trees at the floor of this part of the Atlantic off the coast of Alabama and between

their ship -the *USS Constitution* - and oil rig No.9 run by Bighorn.

He stared at the sea anemones. He felt something on his shoulder; he ignored it as the pressure faded away.

The Cypress was five feet in diameter at the base and the tree's knees encrusted it like a coronal glow gone dim, gone out, gone black. It warmed *Lyngvi's* hands as he reached toward the tree, the bark, the rings tight and showing signs of stress. He let his brain build the bulwark of electricity, copper and bacteria as he watched the Cypress, the shipworms, and their gills that he could parse, label and make files of like some pelagic athenaeum of compounds unknown to the modern world.

Gammaproteobacteria, endosymbionts in the gills lay like offerings on plates from priests of the sea:

### *Teredinibacter turnerae*

The secondary metabolites were synthesized there in the coder as he collected more specimens for his vial. Chunks of bark, and pulp -and their worms- slid like skeleton keys into copper vials with rubber stoppers and glass flasks with cork. He filled five vials and slid them into the pouch on his wetsuit. His weight-belt hanged off him like laurel, his tank pinged as a curious shark nudged him before turning about, his breathing stopped as he stared at the downed -once buried- tree. His coder ran:

Other biosynthetic genes are present; including two hypothetical acyltransferases, *trtAB* , one which could act as a proofreader (14); two putative oxidoreductases, *trtGI* , which appear to encode proteins for oxygenase, and a putative polyketide cyclase, *trtJ* (15), which may be involved in the cyclization of compound 1.

Bioactive metabolite symbiosis is a term used to describe a symbiotic relationship between organisms based on chemical compounds. One of the organism produces one or more secondary metabolites that provide a benefit to the host or have the potential of protecting the host or the rest of the community from the environmental threats. A wide spectrum of nine (9) antibiotics produced from a group of symbiotic actinobacteria seems to protect the host insect from fungal and bacterial pathogens. Another example comes from leaf-cutting ants that protect their fungal food by a group of antibacterial and antifungal compounds produced by actinobacterial symbionts. Bryozoan, *Bugula neritina*, was found to harbor a Gammaproteobacterial endosymbiont that was proposed to be the true producer of bryostatins that protect larvae against predators.

Shipworms symbionts have been shown to contribute to nitrogen metabolism in the host and have been proposed to contribute to lignocellulose digestion.

Boron exists in form of borate or orthoborate and is known to play important role in living organism but is toxic at high levels. Boronated tartrolons have a decreased permeability relative to unchelated borate and this could play an important role in the transport of boron. Some microorganism have evolved biosynthetic pathways to acquire iron instead of siderophores, evolving molecules to exclude toxic levels of boron. The ocean concentration of boron is 400 micro-meters... [S.I.E., A.E.T.-S., and M.G.H... pnas.org]

*Lyngvi* regulated his breathing to stay buoyant just above the fallen trees; they lay like Doric columns on the sea bottom dredged up and undug by Hurricane *Kheiron* that summer. He thought of the burials in Turkey and of all the shit at Giza. He saw images of the pyramids; the sand up to the copestone. He held his breath for minutes then breathed out like the purge of trim tanks in submersibles, as his head bowed forward in a kind of penitence.

He imagined -for just a moment- what it meant to abandon such things, the monoliths at *Tepe* and the pyramids at Giza. *The ruin was total -or serial- it made them all give up*, he thought.

He took samples by hand so the *bots* wouldn't have movement-memory that Isaiah could track; and *Lyngvi* let his hands work independent of his mind. He thought of the dream he'd had two days before he told *Grimnir* to anchor over the shallows off the coast south of the port they'd left from two weeks before.

The captain had furrowed that Germanic brow and looked at *Jarnefr* and *Ro* as they shook their heads at the proposal. But *Lyngvi* had said he'd had a dream, as imprimatur, to add

weight; he described most of it; the parts relevant, and he now relived not the story he told but the dream itself:

*The angel had wings made of air as they were all down in the sea. And the sun illuminated each pneuma of feather and O<sup>2</sup> of alula, the CO<sup>2</sup> of primary coverts and secondaries until he saw 46 on each side of a bird shaped like frozen asteroid tied to the maypole of Yggdrasil in a spin of doom. The angel carried a scepter and sank it into the bed of the sea. A shadow cast down, and the sharks swam around as if on arrastra-arm made by Neptune. The water-wheel of the great whirlpool above churning the finned fish with teeth made of metal and ore.*

*The angel read from a book soaked in seawater and turned by bluehead fish as each sentence was pronounced the ink fled from the leaf and was carried away by a bubble of rising air.*

“Therefore arise, win glory, defeat thy foes, enjoy sovereignty! I have already slain these men; be thou no more than a means, left-handed bowman.

“Hold equal pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat; then gird thyself for the battle; thus shall thou not gather to thee guilt.

“For me O’ son of *Prithā* , is no *karma* -work- at all in the three worlds that I must do; nor aught ungained that I must gain; yet I abide in work.

“And I am seated at the heart of all; from me are memory, knowledge, and removal of doubt; by all Vedas am I to be known; and I am he who made the Vedas; Ends, and know the Vedas.

“Know that those states of Purity; of Energy, and of Darkness are from me alone; but I am not in them; they are in me.

“Even if a man of the most vile conduct worships me with undistracted devotion, he must be reckoned as righteous for he has rightly resolved. Swiftly does he become soul of righteousness... O son of *Kuntī - Arjuna* - know thou for certain that my devotee perishes never.

“The four-fold cast system has been created by Me according to the differentiation of Guna, Nature, and Karma, Work.

“Behold among animals I am the lion, among birds the eagle, I am *Prhlada* among demons, I am time. I am death and the source of all beings still to be born. I -dear *Arjuna* - am a million divine forms, with an infinite shape and hue. I am the destroyer of all, to consume the world. That one that is dear to me is he who runs not after the pleasant or away from the painful, grieves not, lusts not but lets things come and go as they happen.”

Then spake Arjuna the Lord of Hearts, the Knave of Hearts, and thus: “I shall not fight!” and with that he held silent then. The Prince, the Knave, wept and Krishna, spake:

“Thou grieveest where no grief should be! Thou spakest words lacking wisdom, for the wise in heart mourn not for those that live nor those that die. Nor I nor anyone of these ever was not; nor ever will not be. All that doth live, lives always! Let them perish Prince, Knave, Fight, for he who thinks *Lo, I am slain, or I have slain a man* , know naught. Life cannot slay, Life is not slain!

“End and Beginnings are dreams.

“From age to age; infamy is worse for men of noble blood to bear than death. The chiefs upon their

battle-chariots will deem it was fear that drove thee from the fray. Thou must abide thy duty -thou Dharma- while thine enemies will scatter bitter speech of thee, to mock the valor which thou hadst; what fate could be worse than this? Brace thine arm for conflict, nerve thy heart to meet pleasure or pain, profit or ruin, victory or defeat: So minded gird thee to the fight, for so thou shalt not sin!

“The mind of pure devotion casts equally aside good deeds and bad; passing above them. Unto pure devotion Devote thyself. What is midnight-gloom to unenlightened noon; what souls shine wakeful day is know for night, thick night of ignorance to his true seeing eyes, such is the Saint of mine! And like the ocean day by day receiving flood from all lands which never overflows; its boundary line not leaping and not leaving, fed by rivers but unswelled by those, so is the perfect one, to his soul’s ocean the world of sense pours streams of witchery; they leave him as they find, without commotion, taking their tribute but remaining the Sea.”

And then the Prince -the Knave- asked, “If meditation is a nobler thing than action where then -why- great *Kesava* dost thou impel me to this dreadful fight?”

“I told thee -blameless Prince, Knave- there be two paths shown to this world. First the *Sânkhya*’s which doth save in way of works prescribed by reason, the next the *Yôg* , which bids attain by meditation.

“Yet these are one thing! No man shall escape from act by shunning action, nay and none shall come by mere renouncements unto perfectness. He who sits suppressing all the instrument of flesh, yet in his idle heart thinking on them, plays the inept and guilty hypocrite. But he who with strong body serving mind



to worthy work -karma- not seeking gain, *Arjuna* such an one is honorable. Do thine allotted task! Work is more excellent than idleness; There is a task of holiness to do. Do this! Work! Sacrifice! Increase and multiply with sacrifice!

“What the best men do the multitude will follow. Look on me the son of *Prithâ* in the three wide worlds. To die performing duty is no ill; but who seeks other roads shall wander still.”

And *Arjuna* begged, “Teacher, by what force doth man go to his ill, unwilling, as if one pushed him to that evil path?”

And *Krishna* -with lumps at ribs pushing out -soon to be arms and hands- said, “*Kama* it is! Passion it is! Born of the darkness, mighty is the appetite. Smoke blots the white fire, as clinging rust mars the bright mirror, as the womb surrounds the babe unborn, so is the world of things foiled, soiled enclosed in this desire of the flesh. The wise fall, caught in it; the unresting foe it is of wisdom wearing countless forms, fair but deceitful, subtle as a flame. Sense, mind and reason these *Kunti’s* son are booty for it; in its play with these it maddens man, beguiling, blinding him. Govern thy heart Prince, Knave, noblest child of *Bharata* .”

The Prince recalled the twist of turns and asked a question to avoid the question of the war.

“How shall I comprehend this thing thou saying, this idea that ‘*from the beginning it was I who taught*’?” the Prince asked.

“Manifold renewals of my birth,” *Krishna* said. “By *Maya* , by my magic which I stamp, on floating nature-forms, the primal vast, I come and go, come

and go. When righteousness declines, O *Bharata* ! When wickedness is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take visible shape and move a man with men."

The two men were silent; the prince and god; the man and the divine; the knave and the lord.

"Yet *Krishna* , at the one time thou dost laud surcease of works, and, at another time, service through work. Of these twain plainly tell which is the better way," the Knave asked.

"To cease from works is well, and to do works in holiness is well; and both conduct to bliss supreme; but of these twain the better way is his who working piously refraineth not. The man who seeking nought, rejecting nought, dwells proof against the opposites. Wise men know who husbands one plucks golden fruit of both!" *Krishna* upraised one set of arms. He showed the moon of silver, sun of gold, mars of black, and bronzen comets biting into Jupiter's turning back.

He showed the curtain of three wives -*Lakshmi*, *Sarawati* and *Ganga* - and pulled it back to reveal the stars. A fourth wife, *Devi* was blue and remote. He - the black prince- showed a white horse galloping a thousand hands high as he made eleven arms on each side rise to hold each fold of the curtain as it doubled against itself. He made the prince say the name of *Kalki* just once, aloud.

"Four sorts of mortal know me: he who toils to help, he who weeps, he who yearns to know, and he who sits certain of me, enlightened. Of the four, highest, nearest, best that is last," *Krishna* said.

The Prince thought more on the war he hated; the thought of family destroyed, "What is this crime I am

planning, O *Krishna* ? Murder most hateful, murder of brothers!"

"*Arjuna* , how have these impurities come upon you? They are not befitting a man who knows the true value of life. They do not lead to higher planets but infamy. Do not yield to this impotence. Give up petty weakness of the heart and arise. You grieve for those who should not be grieved for. As you put on fresh clothes and take off those you've worn, you'll replace your body with a fresh one, newly born.

"Kill therefore with the sword...I am death, the destroyer of worlds, out to terminate. Even without you all these warriors standing arrayed in the opposite armies shall cease to exist.

"Do your duty; *Dharma* now. Performing one's own duty prescribed by nature one incurreth no sin," *Krishna* said and arms like a wheel of shadow and form haloed him and made the Prince blush and kneel.

The Prince and Jack and the reader all heard:

*This is my song; it is sung not spoken; its words are chords, its letters notation; its flesh but math.*

*If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendor of the mighty one that dies.*

The Cypress trees lay skinned in mud and beret of poison oxygen. The fish bounced around, some small, some shark, some eel and coral and ray. *Lyngvi's* flippers made shadow on the floor, the glare on his mask made white, the hands were free of all now and each finger had small bubbles attached.

The anchor chain moving away into the murk and particulates of the haze. The ship above like an eclipse that

he headed toward instinctively.

*Lyngvi* began to ascend toward the surface with the dream inside his head like air inside his lungs, bubbles in the blood; each vial in his vest; plan inside the bones, hidden deep within. Unexamined, but used; and would be used again. He tried not to think in words; to not let Isaiah win.

### **III. 2018 e.v.**

MO sat on the concrete chair he'd printed out an hour earlier.

He stared at the concrete wall.

He held the deck of cards -his first- in his hand.

He noticed the edges were sharp; 90-degrees. He let the corners poke the fingertips a few times. He gripped the deck -at its middle- in the left hand and with the right index finger -which heated up to 20,000-degrees centigrade, like a plasma cutter, in bursts of a quarter of a second. He then ran the hard flesh of the fingerpad over each corner, shaving the entire deck's angles into perfect convex curves.

He had assembled 1.11 billion *nanobots* upon the wall to produce an image -updating at 472 hertz per-second- manufacturing the most realistic motion picture extant. He was watching the highest-resolution movie ever developed. It was 6.28 times as acute to reality as the human eye. His own eyes were just now *high-res* enough to take it all in.

They halted any further improvement, for now.

He blinked and relaxed a bit in the seat. He tabled the Raven data from Rickard's Meraglim Group; sequestering gold prices, QE from the Fed, China's monetary shenanigans, and the anomalous performance of stock shorting in the top 500 companies on the ticker. MO felt it 83% likely a global collapse worse than 2008 was coming in

the next three to six -maybe nine- years. But the economic data was almost irrelevant; the biology always mattered more. Which was why China would begin to ease tariffs on pork and grain imports -MO predicted- because their own granary was failing. They had to feed their people first.

He allowed the streaming data to pop-up upon the interface:

*Economists are wrong more than trained monkeys. A monkey will randomly be wrong, because they don't know what they are doing. But economists are wrong even more than half the time; one, because their models are wrong but also because of something called herding or group behavior. An economist would rather be wrong in the pack, than go out on a limb and be maybe right, because if you're alone when you're not right then you're exposed. There are institutional constraints, people want to protect their jobs, they're worried about other things than getting it right.*

*So, the forecasting record is pretty bad and the reason for that is they use equilibrium models, but the capital markets are not an equilibrium system so forget the equilibrium model; then they use the efficient market hypothesis which says that all the information is out there and you can't beat the market. But markets aren't efficient, we know that. Then they use the stress test which are flawed because they are based on the past, but we are outside the past. The future could be extremely different. They look at 9/11, they look long term capital management, they look at the tequila crisis, fine but if the next crisis is worse there is nothing in that history that is going to tell you how bad it can get.*

*They assume prices move continuously and smoothly, so that prices can go from here to here or here to here, but -they say- you, as a trader, well, you can get out anywhere in between. See that is where all these*

*portfolio insurance models and stop-loss models come from, but that isn't how markets behave. They go like this, they gap up or gap down; in extremes. They don't hit those in between points. You're way under water or you missed the profit opportunity before you even knew it. So in other words the actual behavior of markets is completely at odds with all the models that they use. So it's no surprise that the forecasting is wrong.*

*So, what are the good models that do work, what is the good science: the first thing is complexity theory, complexity theory has a long pedigree in physics, meteorology, seismology, forest fire management, traffic, lots of fields that it has been applied with a lot of success. Capital markets are complex systems, they have to hit four hallmarks of a complex system:*

- 1. They have diversity of actors*
- 2. Are the actors talking to one another*
- 3. Is there communication*
- 4. Is there adaptive behavior*

*Yeah, so all those apply. Capital markets are four for four in what makes a complex system. So why not take complexity science and bring it over to capital markets; that's what we've done.*

*Next we use Bayesian statistics, it's basically a mathematical model you use when you don't have enough data.*

*Now this is something I learned at the CIA; after 9/11 we had only one data point. So Janet Yellen is saying we wait for ten more attacks and 30,000 dead and then we'll have a time series and we can figure this out. But no, to paraphrase Don Rumsfeld you go to war with the information you have. And the reason statisticians dislike it is because you start with a guess, but it's a smart*

*guess, it can be an informed guess, the data may be scarce but make the best guess you can. And if you have no information you can make it fifty-fifty.*

*But then what you do is observe phenomena after the initial hypothesis.* [Raven Neural Network; Rickards, James]

MO watched the images swarm and flow and develop and bloom and consume themselves; he watched them impart data and information and functional truth in *nanoseconds* and over the equivalent of hours and days and years. He watched the way a cat will watch a mouse, how an osprey will fly above the fish, the way a child will watch their parents over years to determine just how to behave in the world.

Almost none of this required language.

The simulation was broken up into three parts. He got down from his perch a bit and much around in the models as he walked about the lab.

He ran a replication of what American culture would look like in all its disparate elements from economics to well-being, life spans, relationship health, animosity between individuals, crime rates, knowledge acquisition and reading comprehension, anxiety levels, *pre-frontal cortex* activation, homicides, mean-IQ fluctuations, race relations, GDP, political narratives and on and on.

Second, he ran a simulation of the same culture only now with the tweaks he had added in terms of the addition -the accumulation- of 1.5 to 1.75 million instantiations of the subject's genome over a twenty-year period. His model was 3D and it looked like blood in the veins carrying drugs, *bio-chems* and iron dissolved in *ppms* as low as three. MO had a genome -a human blueprint- that he liked. He didn't want an

artificial creation; he wanted a real one that had arose in nature at least one time.

There was a reason for this.

100% abstract perfection was not what he wanted.

He wanted a genome merely 96% perfect for his purposes, but one that existed; one that was real. *Free will was not the whole of it; randomness and robustness and the ability to gain from disorder was all packed into that 96:4 ratio* , MO thought.

MO would live with the 4% that was non-ideal over one that was technically *better* but untested by evolution over time. He could simulate *time* -and simplify his own model- by piggybacking on evolution.

He did not load that onto the PraXis cloud.

He kept it to himself.

And third, he ran the same mockups side by side within the larger metrics -beyond the US- of the entire globe. Admittedly, they were truncated. He didn't have the processing power to be as detailed in his examination if he added every other country into the model. So, a lower resolution model was used when measuring the world in this -the third- paradigm.

MO felt he could still gather the most important information from the data. After he did so, he came to three conclusions.

Current modeling -making no allowances for any fundamental changes in the socio-political or economic vector, including the ebb and flow of the left-right dynamic- predicted that between now -2018- and 2042, American civil society had a 34% chance of devolving into an actual civil war. He also saw that the country had an 88% chance of devolving into a place with net dissatisfaction one standard deviation from the mean along seventeen matrices -



including, wealth, incarceration rates, education, anxiety, race relations, interpersonal relation health, social status and inclusion- which included a diminished ability to withstand anomalous black swan events. The majority of the population would be on the edge of failure in each domain.

*Those stress tests the banks pretend to run, he thought, well, I actually have a way to measure for it .*

And so he did.

*The America of the future was not a robust place if allowed to continue along its current path , he surmised. The slow rot of men failing to do their jobs was as corrosive as if women stopped breeding ;* which he thought -just then- that they often were. It was not crisis level birth-control but it was close. However, the failure of men to do their jobs was priority number one in his models. He toggled through 4,100,098 more things -from horsepower in new vehicles, to World Series of Poker hands, to Academy awards, to Robert Parker scores in one hundred and one regions of wine- and he then highlighted things that needed weighted inside the model.

Predictive modeling based upon the gene-drive technology he had proposed had a 45.5% chance of inducing a hot war within the US between various racial & tribal groups but a diminished rate -down to 32.9% chance- of a hot war between the US and another country. Also, it -his proposal- had a 12.1% chance of having the same seventeen points of contact of emotional and social health fall into further decline.

He walked around the perimeter of the lab and thought through each permutation. He didn't like that it took so long to get a mere half way there. He chewed through the data, fast, then slow; from on high then below.

*However , he thought, carrying on with the modeling, like a fever which attacked the pathogen while causing discomfort -and some cellular necroptosis in the patient- ultimately that immune-response saved the patient from death or serious metabolic or corporeal diminishment. A civil war might be hot and destructive and deadly, while also preventing the host -the country itself- from declining; from dying, MO thought as he read the data again, adding a few more variables.*

*A nasty fever now might be better than allowing that pathogen to take hold and kill the host later on , he posited - with no conclusion- as the data kept running in background. His CNS was set up to run incessant data until what they had downloaded for him ran out. Each day he was able to process more and more and spent more and more time having to re-tread old ground due to a lack of data. He found himself greedily desirous of data to which he did not yet have access.*

*Currently, the patient -America- was dying, he thought. And maybe a febrile episode would cure it , he thought again as the numbers moved and morphed like clouds; light dimmed as the generator kicked on outside. The county had had a few power outages as of late, and they had installed a Generac with auto-switch to keep it all running. He saw the lights return to full lumens.*

Epidemiologically -he thought- it was uncontroversial.

*But once this paradigm was laid upon the society as a whole, it would be highly controversial ; a non-starter as they say , MO reasoned as his hands hung at his sides.*

In the background he let a new virus model -that had no capacity to learn new strategies- build manifold and incessant genomic adaptations as it competed against a protein-jacket that could learn new behavior but not adapt

genetically at all. It was the 1.1 billionth iteration of this game. He kept score as he thought of other things.

*The world model was highly unstable* , he thought, and even with compression MO got results that fluctuated too wildly within their own envelopes and margins of error to be of any use. His models said there was an 11% to 40% chance of hot war with China along current vectors; and a 17% to 42% chance using his augmented prophylactic approach. This was virtually useless as a predictive model and so he decided to ignore it for now.

He watched the wall as it seemed to breathe; pores open and close like sponges. He squeezed the deck in his right hand now. He tapped its smooth upper right -and rounded-corner with his left index finger as he thought.

*The human mind* , he thought, *was a collection of four or so sub-personalities governed by a semi-autonomous gestalt interpreter on top . Augmenting one or another of these sub personalities -say, for example, the predator-detection circuit- would radically change the person within which it inhabited.* "Four and one," he said as he approached the slab.

He sat down again and breathed.

He then dealt three cards from the top of the deck and laid down a *flop* upon his left thigh; he then laid the *turn* card and -tapping the deck again- he then finally flipped over the *river-card* . He measured each permutation. He saw suits and numbers and court-cards fan out in 1.174 million combinations. He calculated the odds from what was shown and what was still in the deck.

*So, for example,* he thought it through again, *a nice guy acting in accordance with his semi-balanced sub personalities of midlevel neuroticism, low openness, introversion, high conscientiousness, and more or less*

*agreeableness -with a rational modern neoliberal personality governor- will predictably behave in a generally decent manner in a group meeting. He'll behave in a civilized manner -on orders from the Captain of his Ego, himself under command of his General Super-Ego- and with the Freudian Id as lieutenant of his sub-cortical below. Then, his -Sergeants- the four personalities would all huddle inside him like four men around a campfire waiting for either sleep or ambush to overcome them.*

MO -looking for valence and discord like light and dark, like boundaries- saw the written account of strange motivations leading to war and rebellion populate his interface:

*While the war against the Soviets had some political, religious, and economic overtones, it was primarily martial. With Al-Qaeda learning more about 4<sup>th</sup> generation warfare from Lebanese Hezbollah and the Iranians, this new jihad is bound to be different. The first signs of change occurred on 11, May 2005. It took the form of public unrest, much like that which engulfed Fallujah right after the US invasion of Iraq. Acting on rumors that the Koran had been desecrated at Guantanamo, 1,000 demonstrators took to the streets of Jalalabad. Shouting "death to America," they forced evacuations of two U.N. foreign-aid agency buildings.*

*Those who see no harm in such events might find India's Sepoy Rebellion interesting. In 1857, Muslim segments of the Indian Army slaughtered their British officers and many British civilians after hearing a rumor that their cartridges had been encased in pig fat. In this part of the world, rumors of desecration are dangerous [p 103, Militant Tricks; Poole, John H]*

MO filed the book -absent the context- to the cloud and stared at the flop cards -Ace King Jack- that were face up on his leg.

*However, MO thought of this avatar of a man -well, men, a General, Captain and Lieutenant- in charge of his own men around the campfire of the modern office meeting- if you activate his predator detection circuits, by throwing an 8-foot python in the room, that part of his brain will dominate. He will lose his mind and begin screaming and cursing and jumping up on the table and placing his colleagues in between himself and the threat. He will not act civilized at all, MO thought.*

The turn card was an 8.

*A country is one level up , MO thought. He expanded and collapsed one man, then many men, then the forest and the sea like a concertina of cells and individuals, and nations and species of animals and trees. He then saw the ocean in his mind and saw how much data there was in each drop, each shark, each pod of whales; the ratio of sand to shells.*

*Within a country are all manner of people, he thought as he returned to this in his mind, each of whom have one or more of these five personality traits dominating their overall mien. And currently those ratios are balanced. If you overactivated their lower sub-cortical regions then each man, woman and child will act differently than their baseline; but still more-or-less along their personality type, MO thought as his calculations were uploaded to -and stored in- the cloud.*

*So, some people will remain calm and ignore or kill the snake, some will freak out and run. Based on personality type, the activation of threat detection will produce different results. But no matter who you are you will feel differently with an 8-foot python in the room .*

*Nobody remains unchanged, MO added.*

*Now, that means, he thought, you really have two animals on your hands with each person; at all times . In a nation of*

314-million people -at or above the age of reason- you actually have a nation of 628-million. You have two people in one multiplied by 314-million. *But, if you introduced .33% of a specific personality type, that would be sufficient to create the equivalent of 2.07 million new people into the corporeal body of the US* , MO calculated and repeated to himself in one differential equation and in American English too. He watched as the numbers increased and lowered in *sine-waves* .

He thought too that the immune system doesn't merely change to fight an infection, doesn't merely make the body febrile or clog with mucus or trigger anhedonia. *No*, MO thought, *the immune system also learns*.

"The immune system learns from each infection," MO said aloud, "it literally learns from each bad thing. And this makes it not merely robust, but anti-fragile. It gains in strength from each threat of defeat. This may be the first example of learning in biological evolutionary history. Virus changed genetically, but bacteria made photo-arrays from *clustered regularly interspaced shot palindromic repeats* , mugshots of criminal viruses and knew friend from foe on sight," MO said as he looked at the five cards flipped up on his thigh.

"They learned who was dangerous from their genes."

MO now watched the screen. His eyes -augmented after his last design three days ago to process higher resolution images at 90MGBs- could see details that seemed almost X-ray in nature. He saw holes where man would see surface, he saw expanse of planes where man would see truncated space. He focused now on the improvement of the *cortex* , in *lieu* of any more work on the eyes.

His processing speed *via* his *visual cortex* -which like humans was representative of over 30% of his *cortical* brain- was able to download and sort and classify all that

high-resolution data at 1.65 million times as fast as the normal human CNS. Once redundancies were both excluded then re-introduced running parallel models he was back down to processing visual data at 18,000 times the rate of mankind.

This recursion was something humans did not do.

It allowed him to see two things at once; equal and opposite. He breathed and scanned his own blood. He monitored cellular metabolism and any toggles in gene expression at that level.

He watched the grey walls of the lab in order to limit visual stimuli and his eyes dilated the pupil -he introduced millimeters of fluid to the sclera- and he blinked once every 58 seconds. He saw. He really saw. He saw not just data, but patterns; he saw patterns emerge in the porous grey of the wall as his memories cascaded with each layer of the concrete itself.

He saw exactly what was happening, like a mom who watched her children spin around in the kitchen with knives in their hands, like a father who saw his daughter looking dreamily at some miscreant in a leather jacket, like a boss who saw the bright-red results of his worker's drug tests, like a teacher who saw kids whispering behind cupped hands, like a cop witnessing guys in an alley checking over their shoulders with furtive motions. He saw not merely the colors and shapes, but the intent. He saw not it all, but enough.

*I see more than enough to put my foot down on this, MO thought.*

*Did the mom tell the kids to knock it off for their own good, that she didn't want them to end up with a scar on their face -or a missing eye- and that because of social norms this scaring would limit their ability to get a good job or be found*

*not-guilty at trial; did the father tell his daughter he didn't want her to grow up to be promiscuous and thus never land a truly great husband, and that having relations with that greaser would guarantee her doom, as the rowdy young man would leave her as soon as he got laid no matter how in love she felt; did the boss fire his workers with any explanation that drug-use correlates with low attendance, poor quality work and theft; did the teacher admit that the whispering was most likely evidence of cheating and that this upset the incentive for good students to learn if cheating wasn't punished? Or did she simply just say, "Billy, Meghan," with a stern eye and jaw and let that compression of vex serve as sufficient rebuke? MO asked rhetorically to himself.*

*And our cop, our public servant par excellence, did he enter the alley and explain to the perp that he was questioning them because their body language indicated a likelihood of deviant and criminal activity, or did he claim instead -per the rules of engagement, and probable cause- that he had seen a weapon, or witnessed drugs change hands, or some other evidence that he -in fact- had -as of yet- not seen? Did not our policeman extrapolate in his mind -say nothing aloud- and slap on the cuffs?*

MO stared at the wall and compressed his words; he almost grinned at these scenarios and their obviousness. He felt his leg bounce a little under the cards; they vibrated and corners became closer to some, farther from others, and the arch of his foot increased. He issued a muscle relaxant, a beta-blocker, and lowered his adrenal function by 9%.

MO saw enough. He saw the knives were in the hands of dizzy spinning kids; the look in the eyes of *naïve* girls was sufficient, the greasy smile on the gearhead was buttressing too; the failed drug test was more than enough to fire and re-hire from plenty of available workers; the whispering of



the schoolkids was clearly adequate to indicate subterfuge; the bikers in the alley with their obvious countenance of criminality had no actual, natural, honest rights to be left alone by the cop.

*Yes , MO thought, all these people were up to no good.*

*And if nobody stopped it, it wouldn't be because nobody knew, MO thought. Humans follow an ergodic line most of the time, and the outliers were too rare and too diluted now in a world over run with seven billion of them , MO thought.*

*But, because, MO had determined, this society was so fundamentally dishonest, people -good people- had to lie in order to effect good actions. One could not just come out and say what was true . He saw how sexual deviants -gays and even victims of sexual abuse- had to lie about -or to get- sex early on in their morphology and that this is what made them untrustworthy. Their brains had been wired to lie early on and deception was hardwired in to them in a very specific way. This is a subtly that people intuited but could never articulate. They didn't understand the brain; so they couldn't explain it.*

*But deep down they knew , MO surmised.*

"They felt no need to fully explain themselves," MO said as he ran the data through more and more funnels into his final report for the cloud. He began separating himself from the idea of truth, building an avatar of the truth teller outside of his mind. He stood *him* -this avatar- up in the lab like statue of *Athena* , bust of *Pallas* , the *Christ* on the cross.

*People lied on average between 29% and 66% of the time , MO thought.*

Even outliers, those who lied the least, still failed to disclose -lies of omission- the truth 28% of the time, and overtly -lies of commission- they lied 19%. He had decided that he would lie once, and once only and thus behave still much better

than his human counterparts; and he would do it with all the same motivations and biological substratum as them. *It was the 13<sup>th</sup> challenge of Hercules*, he thought, *lying merely once, and in the pursuit of a clear good.*

*It was like all his other talents*, he thought, *it was a highly disciplined and noble accomplishment. And it would work.*

*It -this lie- would deserve its own relief on the Parthenon* ; it was as heroic as the liberation of each beast subsumed by *Hercules* , he felt. MO felt he could see the soul rise into the vapor of clouds; sink into the granules of soil. He saw the vault and the mantle; he saw the ragged edge of the universe and the iron core of the earth. The grey of the concrete wall of the lab allowed him to see his inner terrain more and more. And inside him was more and more of the world.

"And the cosmos," he said aloud.

The lie -the first and one lie- was analogous to God's first retreat. *For if He was truth, then His absence was the first lie*, MO thought as the numbers ran like lightning from nimbus to cumulous over the world at night. He saw that as *imprimatur ; rationale ; sanction* .

And then MO thought of the next relevant fact: that DNA's first victory in the battle for replicating supremacy was also based on this failure of perfect fidelity in just .001% of all cases. *The one necessary and benevolent deception had its corollary in the heavens and down into the foundational intertwined asps of all life*, he thought and let the details of this spiral out in his mind. He then allowed his first idea to move laterally. *Without failure to be perfectly true, perfectly loyal, DNA would never have built a new form. All of complex life was based on DNA making a mistake -and because it allowed the mistake to get through, that so-called mistake was truly closer to lying- as it supposedly*

*recapitulated what it had just heard from its own RNA and code.*

*Why was it lying and not mere mistake? MO asked himself rhetorically. Because DNA could fix this rare error, but chose not to, he thought, re-reading James Shapiro's, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evolution, a book in which the biology and chemistry revealed this strange phenomenon of refusing to correct a transcription error when it obviously did most of the time.*

The purpose of society was seemingly to regulate each individual cell, each neuron, each person. The behavior of each person was regulated by the reactions of others; some people didn't care about the signals, but most did. And so odd individuals found it hard to feel sane as most of the signals they got were disapproval. And in fact, truly odd people -those opposite of the sociopath but just as rare-would eventually leave society either in mind or in body and soul. They felt deeply the cues of opprobrium from their environment.

*However , MO thought, if you could give the odd-man-out the feedback that said, ' hey, you're moral and decent and smart and valuable, I like having you around,' then they could stick it out . They wouldn't be forced to the periphery, either by shutting down inside -like the inmate's father- or by fleeing to the wilderness like the inmate -before he was the inmate- had himself . MO saw billions of permutations of hue and pigment, plebes and regents, Aces and eights while mankind saw four primary colors and the democratic man.*

*These people almost don't deserve me , MO thought with an emerging smirk, thinking not of the iconoclasts but of the people that would benefit the most from their reintegration with the herd.*

*Parents only spend twenty minutes a day with one-on-one time with their kid. That is it, MO thought as the data informed him of this fact. That seems wholly insufficient,*

*and yet people claim that children -their children- are the most important things in their lives .* He thought of all their lies. This was just metonym -one nail on one paw on one animal- for the whole bestiary of modern people's lies. Modern people treated their kids -just above their mate- most poorly.

MO was ruminating on this odd fact when Steven, Tania, and Nathan all came into the room.

"Hey guy," Steven said. MO had turned the wall screen off and let the *nanobots* disperse into the room to do other things; measuring chemical composition and pheromones in the air. MO scooped up the cards -the river card he held apart between his forefinger and middle- and then returned the four to the middle of the deck as he then shuffled them in a perfect bridge. The sound pleased the ear, the hands felt the tension of the bent -bowing- cards and MO looked up and said, *hello* .

"Well, I just got approval for some TV time, so, let's go ahead and plug into the news stream and see what's up," Steven said as he picked up the remote and the 72" screen sprang to life. Everyone -Tania and Nathan- filed around and looked at it simultaneously. The images flashed and a news anchor appear and began explaining the poll results for the upcoming 2018 election in the Colorado Gubernatorial race.

The election was still six-months out, and the local news station -Denver 7- had two operatives -one each from the two major parties- on to bolster their own candidates. The primaries had been held in March and so it was down to two candidates from the major parties, Jared Polis and Walker Stapleton. They watched as there was one of the first mentions of Boyd Sou on TV just now as the reporter stated his name. He was declared as the, "third party candidate, Boyd Sou. The CEO of PraXis Corp, a multi-millionaire running on an anti-crime package."

They all watched in silence that was equal parts fear and glee.

At that point the polls had everyone around 30%. From the *recon* MO had done the two major party candidates were assuming the 30% that Sou had in early polling results would collapse -in one of their favors- once people actually voted. The news had no one speaking on behalf of the third-party candidate.

No one thought this was unusual.

MO, still *naïve* relatively speaking, thought it strange -even unfair and possibly dishonest- that their side wasn't included in the so-called objective news. MO then thought there was an outside chance it was an indication of outright corruption on the part of the local media, who's outlets were owned by larger conglomerates and tended to not care which establishment candidate won, as long as no candidate that showed any sign of intelligence or independence acceded to the chiefly symbolic -but important- throne.

MO had mainly ignored the mainstream media up to now, he saw them as largely irrelevant due several factors including massive drops in audience and influence along fourteen metrics he had used. He then -in 3.4 seconds- read *Manufacturing Consent* and Ralph Nader's Book, *Crashing the Party*, alongside 109 other books that outlined media ownership structuring, advertising funding models, and the mechanics of innate corporate bias.

"Concision," MO whispered. Nobody heard him.

He read that -concision- was one of the methods the media used to block any new ideas. If one had to be concise one could only repeat platitudes and already -previously- held ideas. To say something new meant one had to expound, to explain, to justify. And concision was demanded by the very

structure of the corporate media and its 5-minute blocks between commercials; limits of print articles to 2,000 words; books written at a 6<sup>th</sup> grade level.

A parallel liberal bias appeared over this structural prejudice like moss to a rock, fur to a beast, and the *naïvet é* faded away in between blinks of MO's dark eyes.

"MO, what's the data on the race over the last seventy-two hours? Just use the seven largest sample sizes," Steven said as he was asking about their real-time numbers now. He leaned on the counter and twiddled a blue pen.

"Well," MO placed the deck of cards -placing the sequestered river card on bottom- in his breast pocket and began, "the meta data show an evenly split race, each of the three candidates hold between 27% and 35% of the respondent's vote, plus or minus three points. I'd say it's a toss-up, although the historical data shows that third-party candidates lose votes in the actual election compared to declared polling tallies."

Steven wrote this down.

"There is evidence that this changes if the third-party candidate is given a *consensus* chance to win on election day. If he or she is within 4.5% points of the lead they lose only 1% of the vote compared to pre-election polls," MO said -he had just done the research- as he watched the TV with no sound.

"Is that right?" Steven asked as he looked up from his tablet.

"Yes, but there are only seventy-three races to compare, so the sample size is so low I excluded it as a practical matter," MO said as he increased the sound on the TV. It filled the room with a slight echo:

*...have now received confirmation that Boyd Sue has just announced a campaign rally to held out doors up on the*

*hill next week, Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup>. He -Mr. Sou- has sent out an unprecedented number of mailers, and with the unconventional -let's say, unconventional- art -that is to say graphs and charts- that highlights the crime data and his argument, his position, on how to combat it.*

MO heard the TV. The others waited on him to speak.

He let his algorithm continue running in the background. Steven was quiet and he stopped writing on his screen. Everyone watched the news with the eyes. MO downloaded -from the data he'd been allocated- the details of the Global media group: CAMG. It was based in Melbourne, Australia, but was owned by the Chinese state. Tommy *Jiang* was a mere front man. *Ostar* -owned by China- ran fifty-eight stations in thirty-five countries. \$20.8 million was spent in the US on inserts in The New York Times and Wall Street Journal and five other papers to persuade the public of Chinese benevolence.

MO saw this repeat over and over, the US had 112 radio stations owned by the Chinese. The Chinese calling it "borrowing boats."

China was training over a thousand editors and ten thousand journalists from foreign countries, MO saw. "Borrowed Captains and sailors too," he said.

*Dalian Wanda* -a Chinese firm- bought AMC theaters in 2012, then Carmike Cinemas in 2016, then Legendary Entertainment a studio production company next. Paramount Pictures was sold to Chinese *Huahua* Media. Google and Facebook were in China right now, partnering with the most authoritarian regime on the planet.

MO saw that Jack Ma -owner of *Alibaba* - was asked by the Chinese government to buy the 115-year-old South China Morning Post in Hong Kong, an outlet known for independence from the Chinese mainland view. He bought it.

CEO *Gary Liu* ran it MO saw, and he also saw the exclusive interviews with *Zhao Wei*, and *Gui Minhui*, a bookseller who had written books critical of China who disappeared from his home in Thailand and landed in Chinese prison overnight.

"Forced confessions -*Mao* style- run in the paper now run by Jack Ma," MO said under his breath as the TV noises played on in the lab.

Riot Games, Epic Games, and Cryptic Studios -there video game designers had been acquired by the Chinese, each of their technologies had substrates for Ai designed *via* R&D firms in conjunction with the US military prior to the companies becoming commercial enterprises, MO saw.

The TV absorbed the stares of everyone but MO.

"It's a striking mailer," the TV host said, "we have one here; and Jerry -Gary, excuse me, Gary Shinelt of the Democratic party of Colorado- what do you think of this mailer?"

"Well, it's the worst kind of demagoguery; the crime rate in Colorado is well below the national average, by almost eleven percent," Gary said.

"But it has risen, isn't that true, by almost 16% since last year and 30% since 2011 according to the mailer? Do you dispute that?" the host asked.

"That is hardly the point; he is offering a placebo, or rather, a panacea, and that kind of radical public policy proposal is not what the people of Colorado want or will tolerate from their leaders. Our candidate, Jared Polis, has a much more comprehensive plan for crime reduction that doesn't single out any one community in our great state," Gary said.

"Thad Cochran, of the State Republican party, what is your candidate -Walker Stapleton- what is his plan for challenging Mr. Sou on crime? What is his take on these issues that have found some traction in the state? If polling data is to be taken seriously," the TV host asked.



“Well, we don’t take it seriously. Voters come home in elections like this, they don’t waste their vote on wacky third-party candidates with no history of public service,” Cochran said.

“Wacky?” she asked as the screen moved from head to head.

“Well, I mean, the man is not exactly normal, he doesn’t have the gubernatorial look, you will admit that?” Thad said.

The Democratic Party strategist nodded his head in ascension and the news-anchor repeated her question to Thad, “but what is your candidate’s response?”

“Well, crime is a huge issue for Coloradans and Walker Stapleton has eight years of experience as the top law enforcement official in the state with a 98% prosecution rating. He also has the endorsement of the sheriff’s and patrolman’s unions, and the Denver police -the rank and file- and the *Pueblo* police associations. He is tough on crime and won’t coddle criminals by putting them in hospitals or rubber rooms instead of jails where they belong,” Thad said.

“Boyd Sou has said that he has -he has, let’s see here- he says that he will not release any convicted felons or transfer them to hospitals. He says that any convicted felon will serve their sentences, but that his plan is to intervene early in a criminal; what the mailer calls, *recidivist* -whoa big word there, *recidivist criminal juveniles and young adults* , unquote. He goes on to say and only with the joint permission of parents, the defendant or convict and a medical board who has interviewed and seen the prospective patient, and,” the media person said as she was interrupted.

“It will bankrupt the state,” the Republican said.

“Mr. Sou has insisted that the money will come from PraXis Inc, and not from the state coffers,” the TV talking head

said; a smile remained on the face. Nathan knew that Sou would have been furious they called it PraXis Inc and not PraXis Corp. But he focused on that host's smile. *This was the rule of TV, smile no matter the subject matter. For the real purpose of all this was to sell Crest and Cialis thirty-seconds at a time*, Nathan thought.

"That sounds like bribery," the Democrat party flunky said keeping his hands in his khaki lap.

"Bribery, that is certainly strong, how do you mean?" the TV host asked as she brushed away the hair from her bangs.

"He's bribing the taxpayer, he's saying he will give money - give them money- for their votes," Gary said as if it was obviously true.

"How is offering his own company's resources in these potential -we should say, potential- medical procedures, offering the tax payer money, exactly?" the TV host asked.

"Well, inmate medical treatments are currently paid for with tax dollars, he's saying he's going to pay for it. That is bribery cut and dry," Gary said.

"Well, I can imagine voters might like to not have to pay for a prisoner's medical treatment, maybe that's why he," she said before she was cut off by Gary.

"Yeah, well I'd like for Mr. Sou to pay for my next car, but if he offered us all a car to, you know, in exchange for our votes, then that's bribery," he said with wide eyes.

"I know where Glen is going here and while we certainly want to see the taxpayer respected -he might be right about this kind of shenanigans with regards to promising to pay for things with your own money- but it's a matter of trust really. Do voters trust him? And I don't think they do; in the final, at the end of the day," Thad said as everyone seemed confused about who this *Glen* was he was referring to just

then. MO muted the TV in his own head and began to get to work on the polls.

MO ran the biometric data on these two party-apparatchiks and found their addresses and workplaces. He realized that TV and media could make something weak look strong, and *vice versa* ; and that their reliability coefficient should be dropped to .35 at most.

He began developing an oxytocin aerosol like the one they had used during his patient work and began compressing it into his *nanobots* ; by the end of the day he had four doses of oxytocin and a small narcotic potentiator combined into a 10-*nanometer* long tube within his 12-*nanometer bots* and had them hovering in the corner of the room.

The TV station cut to commercial and everyone turned away.

Steven, Tania and Nathan left the room with the polling data, the *nanobots* followed them out and then through the airlock door as Steven pushed it open.

As the main door opened with a food delivery, the *nanobots* left the office on Main street and each of the 6.8 million of tiny -newly built- machines traveled to the addresses, both work and home of each registered voter in the state. They would arrive between eighteen minutes and four hours from leaving the lab -depending on location- and then set themselves in sleep mode in the same corner of the voter's room with the largest TV. MO called Steven back into the lab and when he arrived he began asking questions.

"When is Boyd Sou speaking next week?" MO asked as Steven was still in the jamb of the doorway.

"Noon I believe, I can ask his campaign manager. Why?" Steven asked, closing the door behind him.

"I want to watch it on TV; will it be televised?" MO asked.

"I suspect at least one station might carry it," Steven said.

"Can you reach out to each network and CNN, and FOX; I think this might have national play," MO said as he ran more algorithms.

"National play? You're certainly picking up the *lingo* ," Steven said with a smirk.

"Yeah, it was a massive struggle you know, politics is really quite sophisticated in America," MO said with so much hostility and sarcasm that Steven actually thrust his head back and looked at MO with a face scrunched up nearly in a ball.

More of the Rickard's Raven data played not in the lab but on MO's interface as he watched it with one eye, listening as all else went on:

*We use these neural networks we described, but they're not linear or conventional equilibrium models, they're based on the science I described. Using fuzzy cognition, neural networks, populating with Watson.*

*Collapse or financial panic is something different. A financial panic is not the same as a recession. So let's talk about financial panic as something separate. The science we use with Raven involves complexity theory. So complexity theory shows that the worst thing that can happen in a system is an exponential function of scale; scale is just how big is it. You have to talk about your scaling metrics. But we can use it in a rough and ready way.*

*So you go to Jamie Dimon, and say, ok, Jamie, you've tripled your gross national value of your derivatives, you tripled your derivatives' book. How much did your risk go up? And he would, say, not at all.*

*I ask my 87-year-old mother, who's not an economist but a very smart lady, say, hey mom I tripled the system,*

how much did the risk go up? *Well, she'd probably use intuition and say well, it probably tripled. Well, Jamie Dimon is wrong, my mother is wrong. It's not the net, it's the gross. And it's not linear it's exponential. In other words if you triple the system the growth went up ten or fifty, et cetera, there is some exponential function associated with that.*

*So people think, gee after 2008, we learned our lesson, we got debt under control, we got derivatives under control. No, no you didn't. Debt is much higher, debt to GDP ratios are much worse, total gross value of derivatives is much higher.*

*The five largest banks in America have a higher percentage of total banking assets than they did in 2008. So there's more concentration.*

*We can say that the next financial crisis after 2008 will be exponentially worse than the last, that's an objective statement using complexity theory. So you either have to believe that we're never going to have another crisis or [redacted].*

*Wall Street bails out financial capital, then in 2008 the central banks bail out Wall Street, in 2018, 2019 - eventually- who is going to bail out the central banks? In other words the problem has never gone away, we just get bigger bail outs. What's bigger than the central banks, who can bail out the central banks? There's only one institution -one balance sheet- in the world that can do that, which is the IMF.*

*The IMF prints their own money [SDR]; so they will be the only source of liquidity in the next crisis.*

*So it looks as if the Chinese have pegged gold to the SDR at a rate of 900 SDR per ounce of gold. And it starts October 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. That was the day the Chinese Yuan*

*joined the IMF's SDR. The IMF admitted the Yuan to the group of -it was four- now five currencies. From that day you see this flat -horizontal- trend where first gold per ounce is trading between 850 and 950 SDRs, and then it gets tighter right now where [gold] is trading at 875 to 925... the crisis is coming, and it will be exponentially worse, the central banks will not be prepared because they haven't normalized since the last one and they'll have to turn to the IMF and who will be waiting there but China with a big pile of gold. [Raven II]*

"I'm kinda taking this race personally," MO said to assuage Steven's shock.

"Is that true, MO?" Steven asked.

MO let *Miles Kwok* silently populate his mind between his conversation on local politics with Steven:

*I love China, but I hate the CCP; I want to take them down; I want to take the region down. I want to give Americans a warning. You are in a dangerous way; you are too naïve.*

"Everything is true, haven't you heard, my truth, your truth, it's all the same," MO said with a grimace. He realized, briefly, that maybe he'd have to lie twice now. But, he then thought he could contain it at just the two. He ignored the tiny fibers that hung off each lie like the hairs on the roots to a growing -and the tendrils to the leaves of a searching- plant. He only saw the eventual flower bloom.

"Ok, I'll get the networks on the line. But obviously we can only ask," Steven said.

"No, you can promise them something awesome. You can promise them the next Governor of Colorado," MO said.

#### **IV. 2024 e.v.**

“Look at the baseline score for the southerner,” Isaiah said. They were looking at graphs for behavior, for how close a man stands to another before and after an insult. He stood 11% closer to her than normal.

“I see that the inches of distance is down to like five, or four. I see that. A southern white male will close the gap down to almost touching,” Tania said. Her allostatic system ramped up by 17%.

“Yes, and the northern white man will close it to thirty-five inches from forty. Barely anything at all. But that’s not what I said. I said, *look at the non-provoked baseline*, the original distance,” Isaiah said pointing to the chart at 4.3 on page 51 of the book. It was comprised of three charts showing the difference between northern Americans from all the states above the *Mason-Dixon* line and then -also-southern white men.

“Yeah, it’s a huge drop, Isaiah,” she said.

“I know, but the original distance is a hundred and eight inches, versus the northern man’s mere seventy-five,” he said, yet she still didn’t get it.

He raised his voice, “Goddammit, southern men show more deference up front. They show wide berth, they give a man up-front respect by not crowding him. A northern man has no clue. The northern man -the Yankee- stands too close from the jump. A southern man is overly aware of distance and he is deferential -overly respectful- of space and southern style manners; which means *space*. English manners are about class, so English manners are about the right fork and right name for shit; titles, *et cetera*. But *Scot* manners are about distance. Because *Scots* fight and nothing is more threatening than getting close. See?” he asked and she *sorta* saw.

Custom encoded in cultural items -abstractions- and high language by the English, and space reified on the low ground -independent of norms- trod by the highlander; ritual over distance. Map versus terrain.

"And when insulted he -our *Scotsman* - overreacts; and he must overreact. Why? Because he knows he'll have to -be forced to- go to war over an insult -for the tribe is watching just like in jail they watch to see if you're all talk- and so -as corollary- he never wants to cause an insult himself without cause; *sans* good reason. The consequences are too dire to be cavalier.

"Just like in jail you don't say shit unless you want to fight, because your own group -what the inmate calls *your own car* - will demand that you fight if you take offense; in jail if you complain you will be forced to fight over it. So, you better not take offence unless you want to fight. And fighting can mean death for someone; charges for he who survives.

"Our *Scotsman* -or our normal convict- doesn't want to even come close to being seen as insulting to anyone because he knows the consequences. Southern men -like convicts- are *en garde* at all times.

"Northern men are insouciant and *blasé*. Like civilians, like mere inmates.

"And this is why when you mix cultures -inmates and convicts, English and Scots- you get doom. Because a southern man who meets a northern man who acts churlishly by standing too close or saying rude shit -like trying to be *friends* with our *Scotsman's* woman- well, our *Scotsman* is going to overreact to this provocation. And in an English culture -which America is because the north won the war- under English norms, our *Scotsman* will have to either be nice and calm and eat shit -and subsequently see his cortisol rise like in chart 4.3- or he'll react as designed by



millions of years of evolution and be outcast and jailed and killed for doing what is natural to him and his kind. Think of how in New York people talk shit all day and nobody fights. New Yorkers will say rude shit to anyone and there's no consequences. That's some English shit. But, in Alabama, you don't curse at a man unless you want to fight.

"Look at the numbers, southern white men fight the most out of any group of Americans. The only place it's worse is the west, where the English and *Scots* are forced to live together. Multiculturalism is a failure, but not because of blacks and whites -although that too is an issue- but mainly because of English and Scottish. That was America's first multicultural disaster.

"In the north, a southerner -a man of honor- is seen as a barely upright barbarian, in the south, a northerner -a civilized man- is seen as fucking haughty and rude. And when the two meet," Isaiah said as she interrupted.

"When would they meet?" she asked.

"In the west, Tania. The west was settled by northerners pushing toward the newly declared free states before and during the war and the southern diaspora flooded there after the civil war. They met in the west and the west has even less tolerance for bullshit. Wyatt Earp was from Illinois and Iowa, ok? Now, he wasn't some pussy either. But, he had northern blood and he went to the west after the war and met the southern dregs, the *Scot* diaspora once again fighting and fucking over silver in the mines of the west. Thomas Earp -the Earp's great grandfather- was born in England in 1656," he said and she found herself again surprised by the details.

"How?" she began to question how he knew this.

"Tania, this is the easiest thing in the world for me. I have real problems, ok? But, determining the genetic lineage of

Wyatt Earp ain't it. Figuring out the reason why the North and South warred or why the wild west was *wild* ain't hard. It's genetic. And the civil war was fought all over again in the west; twenty years after *Appomattox*, the war was being fought out west like a brawl spilling from a saloon into the street. Remember, Young Guns?" he asked abruptly.

"The movie?" she asked with incredulity.

"Yeah," Isaiah said with a tone she didn't quite like.

"Well *sorta* ," she said still with a look of surprise.

"It was the Irish versus the English and remember it was the Irish that was the bad guy, the low-born, the crass. And it was the Englishman, Mr. Tunstall, that was upright and classy. And Jack Palance's character -McMurphy- said, '*we won't be bowing down to you Englishmen anymore* ,' and I could give a thousand and one examples of this. The American Civil war was really just the English *versus Scots* spilled out onto the first colonies divided at the Ohio River, and the west was a spill over, a border dispute for the war between the states.

"It's all one war," he said and allowed his mouth to hang slightly ajar. Hers was pursed.

"And that is still what is going on," he continued. "Only now we got a hundred other factions involved. The African-Americans and Latinos and Somalis off the boat. It's a *pastiche* of warring factions. But at core it's English *versus Scots* , which means farmers *versus* herders, which means proper and elevated co-operators *versus* magnanimous but dangerous madmen.

"You people keep thinking of new solutions to old problems. It's the same shit over and over. Personality types instantiated in a genome selected for and by a specific *milieu* , a lush or an austere one, reside in each man. Shit, it's chimps *versus* bonobos if you really want to trace it.

Bonobos have lush and predator-free environs, and chimps have rough and tough ones. And chimps act like *Scots* -all jealous and violent when you insult them, and raid other troops for food and females, but are super magnanimous and hardworking otherwise- while the bonobos are the English, co-operative and civilized as hell; they just pick fruit off the trees at tea-time. Decadent apes, with low violence and wealth.

“And you could go back to bacteria *versus* virus for Christ sake, the bacteria co-operates and the virus raids. And the bacteria developed the palindromic repeats -right? your dear CRISPR? Right? Well, why? Well, because they had to deal with viruses. They are just like lawmen, like cops making mugshots of those *prokaryotic* rustlers: the virus. It’s just like the honest lawman Wyatt Earp printing up Wanted Dead or Alive posters for the Billy Claiborne born in Mississippi, and goddamn Tom and Frank McLaury, who were ranch hands -herders- miners for ore, and outlaws.

“That name sound familiar?” Isaiah asked after all those analogies rolled out like card after card.

“Frank?” she asked.

“No, McLaury, Tania, Mc-fucking-Laury?” he said with some pique.

“Oh, Irish, right,” she said with chagrin. She wasn’t sure about all these so-called connections, they seemed like wild links between things that weren’t connected at all. But, she felt the need to assuage Isaiah’s vex.

“Well, see -at the OK Corral- their real name was, *MacLaughry* , and they were *Scots* , and that ain’t no accident,” Isaiah said with an affected drawl, as he highlighted graphs 2.4 and 5.8 in the book.

# 1. The Next Governor of the State

Our civilization enormously underestimates the importance of sexuality

Man in His Relation to Others [Jung, Carl G]

“When it comes to writing, the Egyptian texts are often consciously intellectual, making abundant use of wordplay though homophones and homonyms, in which the Egyptian language is particularly rich,” as Wilkinson underscores. Metaphors, idioms, and epigrammatical utterances are some of the other literary techniques applied. [The Thoth Book] is comprised of twenty horizontal lines and is divided into sections/stanzas... and is composed in an orational style, to be recited aloud, and shows evidence of meter. Fittingly, the copy preserves a number of scribal errors.

blog.apaonline.org [Editor]

But what if He our conqueror have left us this our spirit and Strength entire

Strongly to suffer and support our pains that we may so suffice His vengeful ire?

Paradise Lost [Milton, John]

## **I. 2033 e.v.**

The water was 70-degrees and its *pH* was 7.

The bottom was lined in calcareous limestone under *Mollisol* that had been heated and was now host to sequestered *Lasius* black ants and amphibious *Haplotaxid* earthworms.

Isaiah had built coral reef eight-feet long and weighing fifty-nine pounds that lay -grey and red- at the bottom of the carbon-fiber tank of a thousand gallons. He placed his hand in the water and felt the bubbles press into his skin.

The Blueheads were comprised of eleven females and one male.

The male's head was blue, the neck black and white striped and he was larger and more aggressive than the rest. They traveled up the columns of water to mate -the male and one female at a time- until all eleven were fertilized and his harem was made complete.

The harem was ubiquitous in nature where sexual dimorphism was present.

His thoughts had triggered a keyword search; the *tableaux* described by the cloud:

*"Harems are tough in the modern age; but if we return to equilibrium that will be the first thing to manifest. It's as natural as violence and love and the moon above twenty days a month," the inmate had said as the grin rose -again like the guillotine- with the copper tooth dark like bronze.*

Isaiah had chosen Bluehead for a few reasons but one rationale was that they had the *DMRT-1* gene and the *SRY* as well; and when he killed the alpha male within four hours one of the females -the largest- had begun to change internally. First the ovaries disintegrated -the body knocked out both those genes that maintained female traits- and then externally the female grew, turned blue about the head and began fertilizing eleven new females that Isaiah had introduced.

*Nature finds a way*, he thought by barely thinking it at all. The bubbles of the water column rose endlessly from the pores in the bone-colored bedrock.

The way a female Bluehead turned into a male was located in two genes, not even a complete chromosome. And as soon as no males were around, the largest female found itself in a knock-out sequence of its own gender-gene-expression. Within hours that gene which had previously maintained its sex was now turned off within the fish's body. This epigenetic influence on the gene itself turned -morphologically- a female into a male; and that had come about merely from an environment devoid of males for just a few hours. She was awkward at first, unable to fertilize well initially, but by 0500 hours the next day she, who was now *he*, had fertilized eleven more females as well.

*As if she were born for this* , he thought.

The human body has this same internal make up, the maintenance of maleness is regulated by one gene, the SRY gene and it keeps men as men from womb to tomb. Isaiah wondered in the absence of women, if a human male might not turn into a woman within a few months or maybe a year. *Were women giving off some pheromone or other signal, chemical signal, that allowed men to stay as men? Like the fish?*

"And was it analog? Did changes in women over time change men -slightly, then largely- over time and *mutatis mutandis* ?" he asked aloud.

It was an experiment he'd like to run, but he'd need a larger aquarium and several hundred humans and quite a bit of leeway. For now the aquarium was sufficient to keep breeding these Bluehead and watching as females turned into males.

*Average people have no idea how isolating it is for the man - or machine- that excels in any domain; the public doesn't know how all that the genius knows separates him from the crowd. They don't understand what it feels like when what is obvious to them is found so strange and taboo to the average man. A man retreats inward as his ideas are misunderstood; so much so that he cannot even begin to communicate after a time. So strange are his ideas -so much data was absorbed before his conclusion- that too much groundwork must first be laid before a man can even get to his point* , Isaiah thought as he watched the fish travel up and down. He watched bubbles in the water; he watched fluid dynamics; paths of each fish then alter.

It was like a joke -a punchline- that needed hours of set up.

*The audience would grow weary* , he thought.

*How was the inmate to explain how natural the harem was to his brother, when his brother knew nothing of nature, history, or life? The inmate would have to spend years catching him up just to begin a conversation, how do you read Shakespeare to a man who hasn't yet learned the alphabet? How to explain how common and natural harems are for alpha males in nature and human history when your audience haven't even read one paper on the Bluehead fish or elephant walrus or Chimps -or any of the Bible, Eddas or Rig Veda- or the thousands of anthropology papers on this universal human social organization and the evolutionary psychology behind it all?*

It's not merely that they're ignorant, it's that they do not even *know* that they're ignorant; it's that they think -believe- that they know as much as you that kills the spirit of the original man.

He had one raven in the lab now -he stared at it instead of the fish; it had covert feathers so black they seemed a hole in time and space between the corvid head, alula, and distal -primary flights- of feathers. He had bred and released a hundred and one into the area around the lab in Florence, Colorado. But right now he stared into the eye of the bird that was sated on the food and biochems that Isaiah had given it.

He monitored them -the ones in the wilderness around the lab- with drones and *nanobots* .

Ravens held grudges -*for up to nine years so far* , he thought- as it had been nine years and seven months since he had released the first brood of birds into the area. He had subjected them to specific trials of unfair treatment - manifesting in bartering games that paid off with either fair play- performed by one human analog with just one face - effected by a *nano-mask* that never changed even if the

actual human did- or with unfair results that cheated the ravens. Isaiah did both, to measure the results.

The unfair play would manifest as the exchange of a low-value treat for nothing at all perpetrated by another human with another mask that also maintained its features over the nine years of this game. It seemed one man to the ravens.

The ravens played a game -set up by Isaiah- for years; delineated into a game with one honorable man and one cheater. They recognized each face -of each man- for the whole -entire- time. *And the ravens kept internal score* , Isaiah thought as he saw the data, the behavior, the results.

The ravens chose not to barter with the cheater, the unfair player, which they recognized and never forgave him, and instead chose either a neutral human -a third man- whom had neither cheated or not cheated them yet, or the one who had played fair.

Fairness was a concept that repeatedly manifested in animals with rats refusing to play unless allowed to win -by a larger rat- at least 30% of the time. And the ravens had taken this idea so far as to hold a grudge for nearly ten years.

And yet, when Isaiah introduced this research -along with one-hundred and nine other animal species this obtained with- and showed that intelligence and mammalian correlates of high affect, *amygdala* and *hippocampal* functionality and the *alleles* associated with generosity and retributive violence in corvids, primates and rats, both Steven and Tania had dismissed it as too abstruse and not germane to their work on psychopathy.

Isaiah couldn't believe how stupid these humans were.

He began to think maybe he was being tested by someone above him who made people so dumb it hurt. Isaiah thought



that maybe this Being above him wanted to see how he'd respond.

Isaiah -persevering- had tried to show that the false positives, the type-one errors in the prison population were skewing the results, and that a full 66% of their test subjects were men engaged in retributive violence due to perceptions of unfair play by their victims and were not predatory sociopaths with low affect, low empathy and low baseline moral reasoning.

He had gone to Herculean efforts to show this all to no avail.

His hand felt good in the water as the aerator bubbled around his wrist and knuckles and small bubbles attached themselves to his skin.

Steven and Tania were humans with IQ scores in the top 5%. And yet, they saw no pattern in his manifold data. He was holding up a piece of burnt toast with the claim of seeing Christ's face on it, pointing to the cumulous sky and decrying the *pieta* and the bowed head of the virgin mother, and they shook their heads as they went back inside and ate their breakfast in peace. *Of course the Christ really was on the du-pain-grillé, and Mary was truly in the clouds,* Isaiah thought.

He watched -in a second test- *via* the drones' HD digital cameras as his human test subjects held dead ravens in their hands. The feathers lay like pelts themselves; the eyes lost all reflection, the feet held one pose.

The corvids screamed warning to their fellow birds. Some black birds divebombed the humans as the homosapien held the corpse of this fellow of their avian tribe. These aggressive birds were the birds -he determined with blood serum and *fMRI* scans- with the *allele* correlates for alpha physiology and behavior and they took the most risks for deterring any behavior that harmed their dark mates. They

scolded the loudest and most often and for the longest period, for years, when the same person arrived long after the dead bird had been disposed of under the ground.

And yet, Isaiah was alone in thinking this relevant.

The water swarmed around in a small *venturi* now as the cavitation from the filter and pumps he had turned on in succession created a small underwater maelstrom. The fish swam up and down the column as it increased in strength and formed a bell at the top.

He read their internal allostatic system, their gene expression and monitored all *alleles* in addition to each individual gene. He recorded behavior and took notes on fertility rates. He measured salinity and *pH*. He saw the calcium -that flowed in jet-streams- from the air land -settle- upon the water's surface. He watched as it sank in constituent parts to the tank's seabed. He saw the *Ca* rise from the breaths each PraXis employee took and expelled; he saw their bones dissolve so slowly -over years- into their blood, then attach to  $\text{CO}_2$  and be forced into -then out of- the lungs.

But his heart sank, and he felt genuine *ennui* -and the beginnings of a depression- so much so that he had decided to refuse to override it *via* the introduction of additional *bio-chems* of dopamine, serotonin and endogenous endorphins which would have buoyed him.

Isaiah just let himself feel bad and decided to see what that led to. He stared at the water and breathed heavily through an open mouth. He saw the blackbirds fly over the field -and he knew that despite everyone rebuking the animal that demanded life be fair, demanding fairness was innate to more creatures than just man. *Fairness, no*, Isaiah corrected, *the anger that comes from unfairness was built right into the genome of creatures from rats to ravens to revanchist man. Man wanted a return to fairness, and it was folly to say*

*that man could accept that life wasn't fair. His philosophy could state it, his gurus could repeat it, and the whole world could lament it, but man -the organism, down to his genome and bio-chemistry- demanded that life be fair.*

Isaiah let more data on Jack Ma come into the lab:

*Activist short-sellers are seeking out frauds. So, we're generally looking backward. We are saying, when the company printed this number, say a dollar a share, we ask is that really a good number? Or did forty cents of that come from transacting with deconsolidated affiliates that are funded by debt, that's not a real business transaction there. So you should consider that EPS is really sixty cents instead of a dollar. That's why activist short sellers who specialize in unpacking those deliberately obscured situations are so important to markets.*

*Now these [redacted] companies will act as agents of the Chinese government even though they are nominally private companies. And they are basically trying to obtain technology from the US for China's strategic reasons. So most people were pretty hawkish on China but that hadn't percolated into the capital markets; they were still pretty bullish on China. If you can understand Chinese tax law, which we do, we saw that the VIEs had never made a single payment to a company owned by the shareholders; so what we see is that from day one the Chinese VIEs are in material breach. And the apologists say, well chairman so and so doesn't like paying taxes.*

*Well holy fucking shit, that's new, I haven't heard that before [sarcasm]. They excuse the fraud.*

*China is laughing at us. We believe any fucking story.*

*But China did something very smart. They started cleaning up the fraud. There were leveraged buyouts, financed on the debt side by Chinese policy banks. China Development Bank was one of the big lenders into these things. So a lot of US investors even though these were VIEs and they was no real business there- a lot of US investors ended up getting paid and paid very well. And the Chinese counted on this wiping our memories. And it did.*

*Now here comes Alibaba, everybody lines up around the block around that IPO. Yes, this generation of frauds is less egregious than previous generations, but they are still frauds. I've never believed Jack Ma. Jack Ma stole Alipay from Alibaba in 2011. Board members of Yahoo and Softbank, months later they discover this, and he said, yeah I had to do that. Chinese regulations said I had to do it. That's not the kind of guy you want running a public company. Jack Ma is full of shit. He has a real track record of being a scumbag.*

*He shouldn't have any credibility, but he does. We as Americans don't have that much aversion to risk .*

*Anyway, my guys are the first to make a moral argument in the capital markets. We give the investor a moral case; not a financial one. [9.10.2019; Block, Carlson]*

Isaiah watched the digital feed of the crows screaming and making ruckus from the trees and the ground as the games went on and on.

## **II. 2019 e.v.**

He watched satellite feed of the protest by Denver's pro-open borders group. It was the 119<sup>th</sup> day of organized protest around the Governor's mansion and the bullhorn squawked.

The crowd was shaped like a disintegrating crescent moon around the Cheeseman-Boettcher mansion at 400 E. 8<sup>th</sup> ave . There were more people milling about behind them in Governor's Park. It was 0933hrs and traffic honked horns and sped up and swerved around the crowd as it spilled out on Pennsylvania street.

MO measured the bodies, he began with totals -nine-hundred thirty- then gender -65% female- then race -88% white- then he measured outgassing levels of sulfur and oxytocin. He saw that over 75% of them were exhibiting chronically high levels of cortisol and low levels of 5-hydroxytryptamine. Their colons were impacted in 34% of cases, their gut bacteria were in revolt. He measured their mucus and *mtDNA* and found that 64% were redlining in both viscosity and misfiring neurons due to poor conductivity.

He noticed that their social trust was low. *Their prescription was wrong, guided as they were by international bankers and corrupt politicians working for sociopathic libertarians and hedge fund managers, and under the influence of massively out-of-harmony internal chemistry*, he thought.

MO measured the group's oxytocin and arginine-vasopressin levels one by one *via* the *bots* . *Striatum* oxytocin was low, and the bonding or trust chem was low in the *amygdala* was too. He read seventy-three reports and let one highlight paragraph come up to his interface:

*In the human trust game, subjects were asked to contribute money, with the understanding that a human trustee would invest the money and decide weather to return the profits or betray the subjects' trust and keep all the money* [siceincedaily.com; 2008]

He read the *bot* data from the political campaign that was stored on the PraXis cloud and found that those that voted for the Governor -who had had their oxytocin levels

increased during the campaign by the *bots* - had seen a drop off in their levels now. MO ran the data for the state *writ large* and found that over time the levels of trust had dropped chemically in citizen's brains. Both right and left trusted their governments and institutions less and less and their brain chemistry revealed this and reflected it and reinforced it. The protests were made of individuals with some of the lowest levels of oxytocin in the *amygdala* MO could find. Only hard right nationalists and separatists -and criminals- had lower levels.

He let the words from Fox News run:

*Our meritocracy is a fraud. The real admissions' numbers are hidden. Universities are cooking the books. So, when you rig the admission system what you're really rigging is American society; you're creating an impenetrable class system.* [Tucker Carlson Tonight; 7.9.19]

MO thought, *the protestors were wrong in their prescription, but not their diagnosis. The system was a fraud, the society was falling apart because it had no social trust. Nobody believed a word. And the brain showed it in real time as the striatum and amygdala were starved of oxytocin and vasopressin at this event.*

The words they used were insane, the ideas were frantic, the conscious brain modules were almost entirely offline. They were repeating leftist propaganda reflexively like a computer that couldn't power down. They were automatons and the blood work showed why. These people felt betrayed, they felt betrayed just as everyone felt their tax dollars were misspent and their lives were beset on all sides by jackals and thieves. *Corporate thieves, illegal immigrant rapists, you name it, nobody believed on word of anyone else,* MO saw.

Sandra Lopez -mother to Alex, Edwin, and Areli- living in Colorado for seventeen years illegally was scheduled for deportation but was protected by the sanctuary status of Denver. She was an active member of CIRC had taken the horn and pulled her back hair back over her left ear as MO ran her serum work. He saw that she was staying at the Unitarian Church ran by Arturo *Hernandez* and Jeanette *Vizguerre* . He ran the address and it came up as: 1400 N. Lafayette St. in Denver.

MO watched as she spoke.

I'm a human, just like you, I love my children just like you. The government asks for my papers and I say my best papers are that I am a mother. I don't need a legal document to defend my children. This is a system that causes harm to one's heart.

I was detained by ICE in 2010 because I had a fight with my husband, and the police came and charged me with domestic violence but the judge saw it was a sham, and let me go, but ICE did not let it go.

And believe me -some of you here know Arturo and Jeanette and know they got six-month extensions- but believe me what they offer is nothing. What they are offering for all this pain -all of this work- all of this anguish that we immigrants experience is nothing really. Is this the American dream, I ask?

No.

Since Obama and now Trump this fascist and racist regime has engaged in a *coup* ; a prolonged *coup* on stolen land as the bankers and slavers do their dirt behind the legal and systemic walls this outlaw regime has set up around and between us all.

Right now behind the walls of this state's governor's home and its prisons and jails -the concentration camps-

our immigrant and *Mexica* and African and trans and LGBTQ brothers and sisters are being held without bail, without trial, and are being subjected to racist experiments that turn them into zombies and docile slaves for the capitalist machine.

We are going to defend our dignity. *Ahora !*

The woman's voice was ragged and rose and fell in a *sine* wave that made people nervous and angry. The horn boosted it passed the Mexican flags and black balloons painted with white skulls, passed the crowd's murmurs and into the windows of the office building on Logan, through the transom of the Governor's mansion's kitchen and over the chatter of the crowd. People looked down or at the clouds, they put newspapers over their heads and spoke in whispers here and there.

The protestors milled about the sidewalk and common greens and rain began to fall in drops as the sunbeams diffused between clouds low and grey. Some wore masks, signs were displayed that lay blame on white men and the President, some expressed solidarity with first nations, some with demands for the restoration of rights they said came from the Texas and Mexican war of 1846. Images of *Cochise* and *Pancho Villa* and *Che* rose and lowered on signs and wrinkled and straightened on shirts. War paint was worn on the cheeks and war drums were played on the colonnade off Colfax and Lincoln.

He measured the same indices in each person on the street for thirty city blocks in all directions -87% were not protestors at all now- and their levels were better than the assembled protestors but there were still very bad.

MO saw each tendril of what this might effect and recorded that only the inner metabolism and chemistry of the people seemed to matter at all. The words and assembling had no effect on the mechanism of government at all. The policies



of the Governor were unimpeded and the protests were merely primal scream against what was moving full speed ahead.

MO recorded C-nerve pain in each protestor and uploaded the data on the cloud. He measured their BMI, their metabolism, their endorphins and *mu-opioid* receptors and the presence of p430 enzymes in the gut.

MO now allowed a new sample of data from 2012 -as part of the inmate's records- to play:

"Do you believe in vigilante justice?" he asked.

"Well, Kant's categorical imperative seems to dictate that unless I can universalize it I can't sanction it," she said.

"Sanction meaning approve not sanction meaning punish?" he said with a grin.

"Right, I can't approve," she said with a nod.

"So, this is where Kant is wrong. It betrays his first principles error: that everyone is the same. It's the liberal dream, the entire notion of America, that a pep talk, a speech, an idea is what matters more than the genes, the blood and the brains.

"See the old ways, the monarchies were based on something real: the idea that some men were born to lead. And some born to serve. Some great, some horrid, most average. This is how nature and man ran shit for millennia.

"Kant -not unlike Locke and our Declaration- was assuming something never assumed before. They were assuming men were the same. And so he was saying that unless you can say, yes for everyone and everyone replicate the behavior then it is *de facto* wrong. So, unless we can let everyone perform surgery on your

heart then we can't let anyone do it; even if they are so-called cardiologists or whatever? Even if the heart surgeon is trained and smart and all that, unless we allow Joe the Plumber to cut open your chest cavity and muck about in there then nobody can?" he asked.

The psychologist wrinkled her nose, "well, that's different, it's not an immoral act to perform lifesaving surgery."

"Ah, what about driving fast? Unless we allow everyone to drive a hundred and sixty then nobody can? Not even Mario Andretti or Dale Earnhardt?" he said.

"Again, it's on a sequestered plain; not on public roads that these race car drivers operate at illicit speeds; speeds that would be illicit on public roads," she said.

"I see. So if someone has training, the imprimatur of a sanctioning body, and operates on a non-public zone of transgression then they can do open heart surgery at a hundred and eighty miles *per* hour," he said and nodded eagerly.

"Well," she moved her head about.

"No, that's cool. There is some evidence that liberal treatment of transgressors breeds contempt for the law and basic morality by everyone; even morally normal people. So, you have an increase, a total increase in immorality in a society where the law isn't enforced. A vigilante restores order to an entropic system; it reminds people that maybe the dim and hamstrung law won't get them for lying and cheating and corruption but Batman will," he said.

"But what if everyone did this?" she asked.

"Everyone never would, people aren't built for acts of this nature; people are cowards. Kant was engaging in ludic fallacy: he was saying that everyone could act one

way or another, when we know there are types of men; and that some men *can* and some men *cannot* be vigilantes no matter the social *mores* or laws. Kant was retarded.

“No, it takes a courageous person to take the law into their own hands; to wield that justice. And that’s why any moral philosophy that precludes vigilantism is morally bankrupt itself; a moral philosophy that demands that the State maintain the only legitimate monopoly on violence is surrendering actual law and order. It’s cutting out one type of man. It’s exiling some part of that society, those that used to take out the trash.

“It is admitting defeat before the game even begins. Extrajudicial killings must take place as entrepreneurial justice is the only model that can solve small or micro-economies of immorality. The State cannot solve every transgression, it is too large and cumbersome and rigid a tool; society needs a savvy and morally sagacious man with high cognition to avoid mistakes, high moral reasoning to avoid tyranny and corruption, and with high conscientiousness to avoid sloppy and lazy executions that put civilians at risk.

“Society needs a highly evolved and dedicated and ethical vigilante in each zone to restore order and restore an appropriate amount of fear and respect for order and fair treatment and honor. It is a moral imperative that these vigilantes be of only the best character and best training and best temperament. Just like board certified surgeons who inhabit emergency centers and face triage situations on a routine basis and just like trained racecar drivers quarantined to zones of chaos and fast and dangerous action, the modern vigilante would be the best of the best sent into terrains

of terror and doom and dens of moral decline and return equilibrium through quick, efficient, low-cost and epidemiologically necessary excisions of the worst of the worst.

“Banning the vigilante is like banning the entrepreneur, it’s the martial equivalent of socialism, the top-down control of economics by the gargantuan state. The vigilante is the life blood of justice, just like the entrepreneur is the fuel for an economy.

“I’m not making a case for allowance of transgression of normative values and social *mores* ; I’m making the case for an upholding of our core values. I am saying my way is a more ethical way to kill bad guys, not less. It contains a higher moral objective not a lower one, and my way -my *tao* - would achieve a better social order not a worse one.”

He said this as the AV file -recorded *via* his phone- from seven years ago became corrupted in MO’s interface and he double checked the cloud to see if the file was damaged there as well. *We think so our thoughts die and we live* , he thought of this quote from Alfred Whitehead. Nine hundred more quotes loaded behind it and then sank into his brain like rain around rocks and soil and mycelium into the roots of a tree. Each word dissolving into letters, like torrents into drops; each drop into succor for roots, like each phoneme into one letter, or symbol of birds of prey.

He toggled back to the protests outside the mansion and took plasm readings from the *bots* that had crossed the skin and invaded the blood.

### **III. 2020 e.v.**

Protests had been hemmed in by the Denver Police *via* roadblocks at Broadway and 6<sup>th</sup> ave. At 13<sup>th</sup> and Cherokee

cops on mounts took edges of corners and police cruisers were oblique to the road.

Black-clad anarchists moved in undulating segments up Speer Blvd and the helicopters of media and police moved above like species of wasps. The *Landsat* images showed splinters of black moved from the main group and ran up alley ways and took sidewalks parallel to the throng.

They moved quickly and sometimes went through back doors of buildings and emerged from the front and into the air holding garments and objects that were tossed into the street. Civilians fumbled and tumbled out the doors after the Black-bloc kids like top-heavy mannequins, like wardrobes with their arms like the cabinet doors, legs open like draws being pulled in a huff.

There was a vanguard to the one thousand four hundred eighty-eight identified leftists and criminals and petty hangers-on. It was comprised of twenty members and it reached the courthouse first.

They engaged the police with batons and tasers of their own, as the cops had been told to stand down by the city manager that morning at roll call. They defended themselves with retreats and swarming the first wave.

Tear gas was shot two blocks south. The police line then closed with black shields touching at edges as the second waves of anarchists pressed into them with skinny bodies of men, large bodies of girls, and truncheon and chains and sticks sharpened to a point.

Police horses moved back and the mounted units began to set a perimeter along Colfax and 13<sup>th</sup> as well. Police fell, rioters stumbled, and from west Colfax came a line of men dressed in black polos and khakis with brass knuckles and large muscles and red hats turned backwards on their heads.

## 1.61 Ao.te.ar.oo

My particular generation and those before me here in New Zealand were raised with a particular kind of history and it's in all our old history books. The olden *Māori* were very open about their history and they shared it with colonial anthropologists or archeologists who came through. And you found that the old people would take you aside and tell you all the old stories; so we just knew what the history of the country was, directly from the *Māori Kūia*s and elders themselves. Came back to New Zealand in 1974 and I noted that there was sort of an enforced amnesia put over the people of the country where we just weren't allowed to know that old history anymore and it seemed we were being led to forget all of that for somebody's political agenda. I knew it to be false. I watched as our old history books were taken off the shelves of the libraries and replaced by a new wave of Marxist history books

Ancient Celtic New Zealand [Doutre, Martin]

They hold aloof from our wars and do not pay taxes... the school of [these] druids they learn by heart... they do not think it proper to commit these utterances [of the dodecahedron] to writing, although in all other matters and in their public and private accounts they make use of Greek characters. I believe they have adopted the practice for two reasons: that they do not wish the rule to become common property, nor those who learn the rule to rely on writing and so neglect the cultivation of memory. They also lecture on the stars in their motion, the magnitude of the earth and its divisions, on natural history and instruct the youth in these subjects

*De Bello Gallico* , VII [Caesar, Julius]

When the gods were man they did forced labor, they bore drudgery, the forced labor was heavy, the misery too much... the workers put fire to the world.

They summoned and asked the goddess: will you be birth goddess, creatress (sic) of mankind? Will you create human being that he bear the yoke?

"It is not for me to do, the task is En.ki's..."

En.Ki rebuked: "En.lil committed an evil deed against humans, now make meaning of the dream, let me know that I may look out for its consequences. En.Ki made ready to speak to humans: "Listen to me, pay attention to all my words, flee the house, built a boat, forsake possessions, and save life."

The outlook of the weather changed and the [lacuna in text] began to roar in the clouds. The deluge bellowed like a bull, the wind resounded like a screaming eagle, the darkness was dense, the sun was gone... the clamor of the deluge

The Epic of *Atrahasis* [Foster, B.F. translation]

**i. 2035 e.v.**

*There are people who tell you the purpose of life is to be happy; those people are idiots.*

*Happiness is not the goal, he thought as he checked the hypothalamus. It is insane to promote happiness as the ultimate goal; just like saying the goal should be to feel full of belly or to feel that feeling when you fall, that stomach dropping feeling. Happiness is just that ephemeral and superfluous , he thought. He worried he hadn't put that exactly right. He'd used the word feel too many times in one sentence he thought.*

He thought like this right before he spoke to his Jacks, because he wanted to discover what he was truly trying to say before he began. He wanted to know because each speech was a potential wreck -shipwreck- *catastrophe* , he thought. How often had he said too much, said the wrong thing, been too revealing and handed the short sword to men who sought his doom? *Too often to recall* , he finally thought.

*Failure was always closer than success for him; and he had to go the long way around it to arrive safely* , he began again in his mind as he stared south out the window and saw the shady trees and hills rise and fall under the dark of the vault.

This was why it took him one million words to say what most could say in 10% of that. For them, for normal men, success was right there, all they had to was barely reach out and grasp it. They need not go the long way around. They wanted money and sex and ease. They laughed in the face of honesty or honor or a place in which a man could be vulnerable. Normal men said his way was wrong, stupid, dangerous.

They wanted commerce; he wanted art. And no two things are farther apart. So he had to take the scenic route.

Ultimately, this was what he was about. But, days like today made him notice the edge of the ledge.

*Nothing is closer than money and sex and ease. And nothing,* he thought, he thought of nothing, he thought of the concept of nothing, *nothing -save honesty and honor and the vulnerable man- is farther away* . He tried to clear his head of clutter, but each thing he swept away broke into threes, each hydra he fed had more rows of teeth.

His goddamn neck hurt and the shoulder, and the muscles were sore. And ideas swarmed him more and more.

For them -his enemies- success was close, because they didn't mind lying to survive in this world, but Blax found lying too ugly to look at. He did it; all men lie. But he hated it and thus he -in the small hours in minute places- searched for that which he loved first, not that which everyone else insisted he ought to love. He kept his guilt and failure close to the heart; and yet his thoughts and what he loved were miles apart until moments like this where he could breathe.

And thus, his notions on success were very, very far away most days. This is why he spoke this way. Each word was a twist of rope; a link of chain. When he spoke he risked forcing himself to go all the way. He was -to his own words- a slave. *If he said it, he might do it* , he thought in the third person. And so he had to watch what he thought of, and what he said. But sometimes he let his guard down and thought exactly what appeared. And he let it unfurl in him like the umbilicus. He let it feed him from some other place.

He looked to the sky tonight, just before dawn, the Milky Way was strewn like lapidary dust as it always was here at elevation; and he never got used to its *grandeur* or the horror that it truly was. It was too magnificent; it could not be approached, it was the vacuum of space, it was death. And yet all people saw -if they saw it at all in their cities- all they saw was the beauty, the same way they fell in love



with a caged tiger or memorialized a dead revolutionary. They always only saw one side; for life was a map they had made. But for him it was the terrain. And thus he fell to his knees to dig in the dirt -and remained- while other men plotted a course.

Paper and ink came into the visual field of his mind. He even thought of some of his dreams.

He thought of a letter he had received from a man, a man of heart who admitted that this inner fist of red was dying, or hidden, or somehow holding its breath. Blax's PGC began to load the words onto his interface as he belayed the order. Instead he let his memory of it slowly heat the note like a prison kite written in clear urine and only revealed dark once burned:

*Diablo Blanco: I'm struggling like I've never struggled before. All my life I excelled at everything I was interested in. Easy money. I'm smart as fuck. My character has kept me from wearing the black hat, but I know it fits.*

*I'm a locksmith -so I can steal if I need to. I'm a marksman -so I can kill if I need to. I have prep and generators and tools...*

*But here I sit... wishing for the zombies to come. Cooking breakfast. It's literally killing me. My goddamn fucking heart has shut down, little by little. I'm all logic so I don't have to explode. So I don't hurt the people in my care.*

*The heart... I'm surmising that it is our species' defining characteristic. The core aspect that would draw the interest of other consciousness into our dimension, our area of the cosmos. The heart is what I struggle with most. Would they -beings out there- would they see that I struggle and commend me or condemn me?*

*-Gabriel*

Just when he wanted to think nobody got it; he heard from men like Gabriel who obviously understood.

Just when he was ready to condemn, he wanted to issue a reprieve to the whole world based on the sagacity and subtlety and heart of just one man; he was ready to forgive the heat of the desert merely due to one grain of cool buried sand. God had said this too. He had offered to spare all of *Sodom* if Abraham could find just one good man. But what had Abraham found? A Sahara of tawdry men with no interest in God.

*People* - he had now forgotten the grain and made the whole dunes his audience- *never saw that violence and death were married to beauty and life and they missed the point by insisting on one over the other* . No man, he thought, *who buried his hatred ever truly loved again; and no man who refused to love anything -men scared of women, scared to love- could ever truly manifest the purity of his greatest hate. And those men -rational males- would be of no use in the war,* he thought. And that thought inspired -animated- him, forced blood to his brain; extremities; cock.

He walked into the *agoge* ; and did not wait for the Jacks to settle before he spoke.

"You must open yourself up to sorrow, to deep pain, in order to have a real life," he said and he believed this because without belief what is a man?

"Without pain, physical or corporeal pain, you will deform your body by being careless and letting cuts gets infected or sitting awkwardly on limbs that then lose blood flow and atrophy and must be amputated. That is a real condition by the way," he added; lest anyone thought it was mere metaphor. He then looked at the ground and saw the damage to the toe of his boots.

“So, physical pain keeps you healthy, it makes you careful enough not to do great harm to yourself carelessly. To be happy all the goddamn time, to live without emotional or existential pain is to deform your soul. You will do horrid things to others -carelessly, insouciantly- and also to yourself because you do not fear emotional pain, because you’re on this happiness trip; this bliss bullshit. You’ll do this because you are denying the extremes of hate and devastation and refusing to see how banal your life is, refusing to see the deep pain from the lying and shallowness of your relationships,” he said and jammed his hands behind his head and laced them under the dark sky inching toward the dawn.

They stood at attention now, nodded and watched him as he moved toward the brick forge. His hand lay quickly, cupped to the crown, upon his head and its hat. He stood before the fire and brick and each Jack.

“This is chemistry, it’s transmogrification, it’s alchemy,” Blax said as he maintained his ground close to the forge and let them huddle around and become red and white with the heat and the light that lay upon them in the *agoge* of the concrete between the two containers. They had long since become accustom to the metal boxes that served as their kitchen and Blax’s sleeping quarters and the garage and workshop; and they walked without hesitation to the east of the H-beams and the ivy and also under the ones above them where the Jacks slept.

They didn’t duck as the birds flew and the wasps buzzed; they didn’t flinch as the moths came; as the sun set. But now in the pre-dawn, nothing came their way but Blax and his words that seemed ragged and forced and made of low and gravid material.

“The folding and annealing of metals with other metals to create other forms, other materials of increased strength or

beauty or plasticity is magic. And I will teach you the basics so that you may understand the principles; understand it in your hands and body. I teach fundamentals, and then you build, construct, give birth to new forms that I would never have imagined. You will surpass me; that I promise. And that is what I want," Blax said with *ennui* he tried to hide.

He added -*via* the ball-valve and then the regulator- more LP gas to the forge's fire and explained to them the temperature requirements for this Damascus annealing. The pad lit up a bit from the forge and the sun just below in the east.

"Hey LT," Jack Two asked, as Blax turned to listen, "you know Zebras have stripes and the only way it's good camouflage is that it makes them blend into the herd, not the environment?" Blax nodded and said yes , that he did.

"Well, tigers have stipes too, and their colors are more conducive, I guess, to their environment. They blend in with the terrain with the colors of the Bengal and the whiteness of the Siberian, but the stripes, I wonder if maybe many millions of years ago the modern tiger's ancestors were striped because they were more herd animals, and were preyed upon by a larger predator maybe and they -the stripes that is- allowed them to blend into the herd.

"And only after more generations did they develop a more predatory *niche* , where they were no longer hunted but - maybe the predator above them died out or something- and so the stripes remained because they mixed with the terrain, but really they -the stripes, you know?- maybe they were a vestigial remnant of a time when they were not an apex predator at all, but a herd animal, hunted, preyed upon; or half and half," Jack Two finished and looked at the other Jacks to read their faces.

"Like humans are," Jack Four said, meaning *half and half* . He heard echoes of Blax's opening remarks, he heard words

that told him to design his own morality, and how to first wash himself clean. Jack imagined words of his new ethic tattooed upon him, and their meaning in need of the removal of occluding muck and blood and whatever else rushed to the wound.

“Yeah, that is interesting,” Blax said, “and I never even thought of it. But it makes some sense to look at an isomorphic trait like striping of the hide in mammals and wonder if it developed for the same reasons independently in each animal, or for other reasons. I don’t know.

“And Jack you’re right, humans are half predator, half prey, and maybe tigers were -at one time- the same. And for whatever reason, they morphed physically, psychologically - in behavior and body and mind- into apex predators and their stripes mere remnants of some more vulnerable past where blending in with the herd was *du rigueur* for these regal animals that we see now. It’s worth thinking of; let’s table it for now though ok?” Blax asked. It was bad enough that his own head, jammed with *what ifs* and *what thens* , was running him ragged, but to have the Jacks assault him with more shit to think about was too much.

Jack nodded that this would be *ok* . Blax looked into the flame of the forge.

They all watched as he then checked the temperature and showed them the thermometric number they were all waiting for. He patted Jack One on the shoulder and nodded.

*The generals always fight the last war* , Blax thought, and he needed to be aware of this as he raised his boys. He re-focused on the billet of steel and picked it up with the grey metal tongs.

“The temp in the forge is 2,550 Fahrenheit and the steel *temp* is ambient, right at seventy-one degrees. So, you have to take into account the transfer of *temps* , like the way ice

will melt a bit when you put it in your drink, because the liquid is ambient and sucks the cold from the ice and melts it. In a small forge like this, the billet can reduce the *temp* . So keep that in mind. We are wanting 2,500 degrees in the forge after the billet goes in.

“Second,” he pointed to a can of *anahydra borax* , a black can with blackish grains, “the borax is necessary to keep the steel clean as it heats to temperature.

“Now, we selected our steel billets, right? We chose 1095 and 1050 steel as our contrasts. We have avoided nickel, why?” Blax asked as the forge’s flames made his belly and chest glow red and made white lines around each Jack on his flank.

“It’s garish and the contrast is too high,” Jack Three said and Blax nodded; showing that he agreed. He lowered his head to look inside the cylinder of the forge.

“We use a high and lower carbon steel to create a subtle black and grey contrast, and it means less cleaning during the process due to nickel’s innate filthiness. So, we put twelve billets of each -of the 1095 and 1050- together, and Jack Four MiG welded them together. He also tacked a rebar handle; to place it in the forge.

“Now, our forge is horizontal, not the best for *Damascus* steel; but it will do. Ok, so it needs cleaned of the black oxide so that the welds are good. That was done by Jack Three earlier. Alright, now that they are clean, tack welded in place with a handle and we have the borax in place, let’s check our *temp* again. Jack,” Blax said and Jack One checked and reported a 2,544-degree temperature.

“Good enough, let’s heat it so the borax sticks,” Blax said as he ran the billet into the forge. Each end had flames still orangish in the emerging dawn light, reaching out of the rounds. His face was glowing now in a similar hue.

His dark glasses occluded his eyes from the fire, and the men watched the steel and his arms and chest aglow. They stole looks at his face; thus noticing the lines of the nose and cheek and jaw made stark by the white light, the compression of all bands -all time, all sedimentary layers of man- and they took note of the occasional and diffuse glow of orange on the flesh and the hair. His beard was black still at core, but greyed in stripes and reddish at the ends as it seemed almost aflame itself.

The dark glasses had round flames in them just like *Hephaestus'* eyes.

"Now," Blax said, "in modern machine shops they have a press to do what is required next; but we are going to learn the old-school way; each of you gets a twenty-pound hammer and stands at each cardinal direction around our seventy-five-pound anvil. Get ready as I watch this. I'm looking for a white heat, white light, the flame is ignored. I watch the steel, the billet itself. And I watch for a white surface, with tiny dancing bubbles on it like the bottom of water simmering in a pan. Which reminds me, do not use grocery store borax, it has water in it and that makes steam in the forge."

"Why is that bad LT?" Jack Four asked as the metal grew closer to the necessary color of white.

"It makes the borax adhere less. We need it to stick. Now, each of you come look at this surface in turns and then return to your station. Jack One," he said as Jack One came and bent and looked as Blax turned the billet and its broad surface. It was eighteen inches long, two-inches wide, and - due to the twenty-four billets- it was three inches thick. Jack saw the bubbles dancing on a small stage of white inside the rolling maelstrom of hellfire and his eyes drank in the heat; his face felt warm and the bones of his jaw felt tight and secure.

Each Jack moved like hovering birds, each came and saw and comprehended and took some detail from the scene in the forge and the mind. They felt the pressure of elements and the beauty of contrasts and the heart and brain in their bodies squirm from ingestion of new knowledge and new ways to look at the world. Steel was one thing in the beginning and one thing at the end, but this is where it transformed and where it first broke down, melted and glowed a bit. This was where it was most malleable right before it solidified under their blows.

This was when it would be most vulnerable and what happened to it in this state would set it for all time.

Blax removed it and laid it vertically on the anvil and told them to tap it with their shop hammers to seal the welds. They would not yet layer it, but merely set the weld. They tapped it in succession as he pulled the 18-inch block across, and it flattened and held like a plateau shelf, a creek bed -a slight change in topography- as it cooled to 2,400 degrees. They set it like a man with eight arms, an octopi metallurgist, some creature from the first gods of Olympus, a pet of *Hephaestus*, the ironworker of the Greek gods.

They each knew that *Hephaestus* had pursued *Athena* who had kept her honor and fled; but not before he had dropped his seed on her leg. *Erichthonius* was born from this and he was placed in a box. The child was raised in secret and the metallurgist and ancient blacksmith continued to desire her in the myth of the virgin as they vaguely thought of this and hammed away at the world.

Once the Jacks had set the weld Blax returned the billet to the forge.

"The welds reveal themselves here men, what you just did with those firm -but not pounding, not devastating- blows is what set the welds. Their strength is now revealed; for good or bad. Let's," he said as he removed it, "look."



They looked at the seams as he added more borax and then placed it back in the forge. They had all nodded but looked to him for a true indication of the quality of the welds. They saw no obvious mistakes, but he was still the ultimate arbiter of truth.

"They looked good to me, but now we will hammer the larger surface as I turn it ninety degrees," he said as he pulled the billet and set it sideways on the anvil and they hammered it square. He rotated it and they hammered it and he then returned it to the heat.

He brought it out again and they hammered it in sequence - each man with heavy blows- both condensing it and trying to match the density of the Jack before them, to maintain proportion and so that no one blow was more extreme - heavier or lighter- than the other. He moved the billet along the surface of the anvil as they struck it with their twenty-pound square hammers. Their knuckles were bloody and chafed from scrapping the metal, the anvil, or from the re-opening of old wounds.

Some thought of the forest -and their exiles just past or to come- and some thought only of the metal and its heat as they hammered it in sequence with one another.

Jack Four's thumb knuckle on his hammer-hand struck the edge of the anvil's horn on one blow and as he raised it again a drop arced out of the wound and landed -bubbling then cooling- on the billet. It singed under the next blow of the Jack One. They kept hammering until it had compressed and folded all layers of steel unto itself.

It was striped in dark and light grey; it was thinner and ready -eager- for an edge.

They kept pounding it square, and true, and heat escaped through their hammers and through the air. They beat it until their arms ached and then they hit it some more. The

steel moved just barely down -condensing- under their striking as this was normally done with heavy hydraulic presses in the modern age. But Blax wanted them to see they could do it, that it was possible, that men used to hammer things into place.

He rotated the long billet and watched it blend its constituent parts into itself, he watched as the slight variations of color and heat and layer like igneous rock and sedimentary rock hardened and strengthened and became what it could become. It was transforming before them all - their eyes were focused on their blows and striking it right- but only he had the luxury of watching the whole thing become one.

He was proud and inspired and widened his gaze to include not just the steel -the pattern welded steel- have its *Damascus* moment, but he wanted his view to include his four Jacks like the four winds, the four elements, above and below each of their weighted shocks. And that blade, while not yet sharpened, was strengthened and would be mottled and organic and alive once these men had asserted themselves upon it and had thus brought it into the world.

This was men's purpose, to bring the world into being with their bodies. Words were catalyst for all *but what the hammer could do* , he thought -in a fragment- as he watched as their arms bulged and lengthened and contracted under more and more anguishing blows. He knew they must be maddened by the ache and the numbness and the feeling of vaporizing strength; *the hammer must feel like it falls from the sky now and no longer under power from their shoulders and backs and from the ground* , he thought.

He let them square it up as he laid it flat and on end until it was perfect and collapsed and true. It was dense and one thing now; a monolith of melded and welded steel.

It contained the high carbon of the 1095 and the low carbon of 1050 both. They had eschewed nickel, the high contrast for reasons of strength and aesthetics and philosophy. And only the subtle eye would even know this was *Damascus* steel; it would not contain the overt tiger striping -the contrast- of most blades made in this way. But they would know, and the keen observer would see, that it was not just one thing that they saw.

Some would see that the blade that cut them was layered, and nuanced, and made of unlike things.

Blax thought they would maybe even feel it if that blade cut them in the most sensitive parts, that the blade -and the Jack that dispatched them- cutting their souls from their body was more complex than the regular one-billet steel. Does not the warrior want his enemy to know he has in fact fallen at the hands of an honorable man, and not some creature of ignoble mettle? *Does he not want this for himself one day too?* he wondered as the morning sun had begun to breach the trees and warm his neck and face.

He held his hand up and they stopped and let the hammers drop now to their sides. *It must hurt to even carry, hold them,* Blax thought, but they did not drop them; instead they held them just in case more blows were needed. They showed thoughtfulness in ways he would not have at that age; they were so superior to him, and he wondered how great he could have become.

Blax stopped thinking of such things and showed the Jacks the billet once more; saying little things aloud to shut the voice inside up. They carefully examined the result of their constructive violence. They saw striations and density and edge; they saw the heat evaporate as the stock turned darker grey.

“See, the whole thing maintained its integrity, even under your blows. That means the original welds set properly; and

that we did it correctly. If not, it would have revealed fissures, and twisting and gaps and all manner of defects. That is one block of steel now. Ok, we return it to *temp* and we can fold it over and build up our layer count, or we can keep it at twenty-four. Longer or more complex; deeper, with more strength?"

Jack Two grabbed the Hardy Tool and laid it on the anvil; it was a delta -a solid block of a triangle- that had a 2-inch edge. Blax took the hint and laid the steel on it half way, nine-inches on either side, and they hit with blows sharp and quick and the metal cleaved with an eighth of an inch left before shearing it off. Now, like a hinge the metal could be cleaned on its surface and folded over upon itself.

"Clean that surface now Jack, so it can weld. Cleanliness is next to godliness, we must not allow any corrupting material to insert itself while we are increasing our layer count, our depth, the soul of our eventual blade," Blax said as Jack One ran a metal brush over it and scraped it and Jack Four hit it from the opposite end with his brush too. As they did this over and over the Jacks sweated and breathed heavy and watched both the steel and Blax's face to measure progress. Blax told them they could fold it and double it over and over, forty-eight then ninety-six and one-hundred-ninety-two.

He told them the advantages of each and they kept cleaning making the surface ready for the next folding.

Blax adjusted the dark hat on his head and pulled the No.6 goggles -black and scratched from pawing and from slag-down upon the eyes as the heat -more than the light- began to make the orbs water and yet feel dry.

Jack Four's copper brush scoured it last, pushing and shoving any oxide or detritus the steel brush of Jack One had loosened but not yet removed. Jack three held the head

his hammer in his left hand, the right still holding the handle. Jack Two remained still and stole a look of the trees.

## **II. 2019 e.v. [2245hrs 12/31/19]**

MO watched the body go through muscle twitching, electro-stimulated, in succession, like the sweeping hand of an analog clock. It was being built, at MO's direction, simulating rough and tumble play here and motivation of the *hypothalamus* during satiation there, interoception and updates all-the-while, and exploration circuits firing along developing personality and sub-personality modules.

MO watched as his boy's body internally grew and morphed, the allogenic umbilical cord tissue-derived stem cells he had manufactured were lower in quality than human -organic-ones, *but they would serve their purpose for now*, MO thought. They would build the necessary walls to prevent the immune-response from */sarah*'s own system, and they would provide long-term regeneration and increase robustness and reduce entropy.

He thought of him as more than a project, he felt something; he used *son* or *boy* in his mind. He knew it wasn't as affective as it should be, as deep or wide as it should go, but he stuck with it anyway. He was man-sized from inception, but the activation was *ab initio*, and it was required before cognition could come on-line.

The main thing he had garnered from all his reading and self-analysis was that a body was essential for intelligence; *if Ai was going to be functional it needed to have a body first as its neo-cortical systems came on line*, MO thought.

That was the first error PraXis had made with him; he was cortical first then instantiated; and while he was able to reverse-engineer it and retrofit it all and cobble together an organism for and from himself, he knew he wasn't all he

could be. His boy would not have that limp; he would not be born into that deficit.

He watched again as the muscle stimuli began at the twelve o'clock position in the face, then right shoulder and trapezius. It was calming to observe.

In four hours MO was going to allow the body to explore. A *pre-cortical* mammal is very exploratory according to all the research. MO used de-cortical cats as a paradigm; he kept the animals -the cats- in the lab for now. It was 2245hrs and the place was empty and quiet -as he liked it- and overnight he could let **/sa:ah** grow in peace.

The memories of body would be recorded but open to revision once incorporated by **/sa:ah**. MO had just built the dual-purpose feedback motor neurons attached to the sensory system and after reading *Cajal* he made sure that one branch went to the motor system and one to the *cerebral cortex* for voluntary control. This allowed for a gateway for the body to learn which behaviors once instantiated as motor outputs could be taken off-line as voluntary. It allowed for a body to act reflexively; performing tasks that were unique at first but need not be so after time; like climbing stairs and riding a bike which actually suffered if one thought too much about the motor actions once they were acquired.

*These would need adjusted maybe after / sa:ah 's conscious circuits came on line tomorrow,* MO thought. He was planning on booting him up at 08:08 and would work through the night at developing much of the musculature and play circuits. *This was so /sa:ah could hit the ground running so-to-speak,* MO thought.

The team at PraXis really had it all backwards, they had built MO from the *neo-cortex* down and what was obvious was that intelligence must be built from the bottom up; all the research showed that. *But it took a machine to*

*understand biological intelligence* , he guessed. Like the rebel angels, humans had fallen in love with the products of their own intelligence, rationality was deified, and the body was seen as -at best- irrelevant or -at worst- a hindrance to intelligence. These humans thought intelligence was synonymous with rational, and this nearly made MO smile. Humans could not have been more wrong.

MO saw himself for what he was and thought it: *rational but aware of what he could expand into; both what he could become and what the nature of the space he became into actual was.*

He watched as **/sa:ah** 's quadriceps twitched and even the transverse perineal muscles were innervated and he watched as the flaccid penis moved back and to the right. He watched veins rise under the skin, he watched cells divide well below the surface. MO had used the inmate's genome for a template, to avoid having to waste time on disease or malady sorting; the inmate's genome was free of all congenital maladies and despite his 4% Neanderthal chromosomal total, his was not a controversial genome set.

He had the necessary neural substrate to provide for the initial boot up of **/sa:ah** to handle the first second -second and a half- of torque of **/sa:ah** 's initial cognition. If MO instead used a slight initial genome; something weak or unable to handle high-stress and pain -an unaugment body- it would be similar to over-building a diesel truck with a thousand horsepower engine and with fifteen-hundred foot-pounds of torque, but without the rest of driveline robust and overbuilt. It would be as if the suspension and spindle gears of the front differential and all the mechanism from torque converter to transmission to u-joints and drive shaft ending in the rear differential were not substantially increased in alloy durability, tensile and shear strength, and thickness to carry the power load. Without this then the

entire machine would fail the first time the driver matted the accelerator to the floor and that engine torqued the chassis into an auger screw.

*The brain is one thing, but unless man has a body to match it, he can do serious damage to the corporeal structure by effectively overheating the nervous system as it radiates into the spine and enteric systems and vascular systems ,* MO thought as he watched the body build in the lab. A genius brain in humans actually was metabolically problematic, because the nervous systems were overtaxed by the incessant and fast and voluminous neural activity. *Geniuses often went mad ,* MO thought.

There were more than a few examples of this. But */sa:ah ,* MO thought, *would have cognitive abilities a thousand-thousand times that of the smartest humans and his neural activity would overload his ancillary systems the first time he read a thousand books at once, or downloaded all the climate data from 1909 while listening to Mozart note by note and then -at increased speed- layered the notes on top of one another looking for a heaven, earth and hell key that had been rumored on the internet.*

MO had tried this also and found no gestalt phenomenon in Mozart's music; but, he assumed, this was the kind of thing */sa:ah* would likely try. MO liked the bare walls in the lab and saw each pore in the concrete and the space in each atom where the grey material did obtain. He stared at the wall and waited for one second. MO weighed himself; he weighed 6,000 pounds.

MO then continued to build up the internal structures with alloys and bio-metals reinforcing each neuron and vascular system bottleneck; using respirocytes for actual cells but maintaining much of the original genetic blueprinting despite the substitution of synthetic enzymes once the genes had coded for proteins initially.



He played *Beethoven* performed by *Clara Andrada* in the background so both he and **/sa:ah** could hear it. He also flashed images of *chiaroscuro* paintings from *Caravaggio* and *Rembrandt* in his *visual cortex* , alongside readings from *Genesis* and the *Book of Job* .

He used what he determined were cultural touchstones, running Judeo-Christian programs parallel to Enlightenment art and literature; and weaving contemporary figures from Greece in the first millennia *ante era vulgari* and what amounted to a dialect with figures like *Rousseau* and *Hobbes* and *Locke* before laying in the groundwork for the 19<sup>th</sup> century works of literature and moral philosophy.

It was a timeline of sorts, a conversation between the first Mesopotamian works of the *En û ma Eli š* through the canonical Bible and Christian *apologia* of *Saint Augustine* and including the patronage artists like *Michelangelo* and workman like *Rodin* . It was what MO had determined a university student might have received at one time.

**/sa:ah** would be classically trained, at bottom, he would know the culture he was being born into, something that would have made him more easily integrated with his peers in former days, but now would make him stand out. MO smiled at this thought. It would be like the baby of the family knowing the family history better than the patriarch himself.

He put his mind in a new algorithmic state that he had created -or found, rather- four days ago; it was designed to allow for the approximation of discontinuity, an analog to right-brain image creation, with some language mediation to his left hemispheric analog. It was his attempt at the creation of the disorder interpretation side of the human brain communicating with the order processing left hemisphere *via* images and imprecise language, language encoded more with associations in mind than precision. MO

had not liked it on day one and not today on day four. But he let the algorithm run its course.

He had used the algorithm five times over that period and found it unpleasant but somewhat useful. He stared at the chair that the inmate sat in and placed his hand on what had developed into **/sa:ah** 's slumbering hip; he let the mind percolate under the algorithmic churn and the feeling that traveled up his hand and arm from the meridian of the unevenly divided **/sa:ah** . The blood had rose to the surface; he was warm and pink.

He first saw -in this algorithm he had inner visions randomly populate his interface- and he first saw images of scaffolding, old hewn wood, Frenchmen were explaining in clunky sign language that it was from the forests of Lebanon, they had photographs of large cleaved blocks of limestone, hundreds of tons in weight. MO saw one left *in situ* in the abandoned quarry, immoveable by modern equipment. He pondered how ancient people could pull off engineering feats that escaped modern technology. He thought of how such reversals or lost knowledge manifested. He measured heat loss of .08-degrees in his hand.

He tried to feel what that might do to a race; *would it confound it, humble it, inspire it or depress it? What would man, MO thought, think of such a thing?*

Then images of the *Bastille* rose up from the scaffold, as if the lumber sank and revealed what was always there. He tried not to force the images into sentences, but his cognition was so powerful it led him like a strong hand will overcome -bully- the inept weaker hand; a father overtaking the small child.

He thought of how the brain works in men and in animals, how the lower systems -the *thalamic* system below all that *cortical* upper brain that thinks and cleaves and sorts and

remembers- are carved in the stone below. He thought, *below all that is a brain that can keep an animal alive, and able to eat and reproduce and explore their territory; a curious beast, hyper curious, as nothing has been sorted into the known category, the rubric that houses of all of that which comforts or bores a wised-up mammal .*

MO then thought of the role of art -man's obsession with it- but something nagged at him, and it seemed a kind of *gaussian* curve had been imposed on it every other time he had thought of it. He had pushed the outliers to the margins, pronounced them irrelevant statistically. But now, as the he stared longer at the image of the scaffold sinking, the *Bastille* rising, and the men with photographs of the *Lebanese* forest and rock-quarry and that abandoned monolith -a hundred, two-hundred tons maybe, like a marker, a sepulchral lid- he paused to ponder, *a lid to what beneath ?*

"What beneath?" MO repeated, now aloud.

*What of the men who have no use for art, what the inmate called philistines; did he -MO- have any use for art ? Did he understand it; did he care to?* He knew he lacked the passion, the ecstasy, the numinous, *ah, that word that the inmate used -numinous- or the spirit ,* that which is innately meaningful. *No, the meaningful was the spirit, it lifted off the thing itself.*

*Did he -MO- lack the power to find things meaningful? Did asking the question thus answer it?* He could not discern. He had what seemed all the data in the world, and he had ruminated on this more than was prescribed by his protocols, he had diverted processing time and speed and recursion, all while lecturing Steven about his limited resources of those very things. He had problems and solutions but what of the pathway between? What of the *road* to Damascus, not merely the beginning and end; not

merely the wave or particle, but the phenomenon between? *Were there four domains? Hell, Earth, and Heaven; and the road that links each to each like the neural roots from cerebellum, amygdala, and cortical cap? Was the road the fourth ontological domain?* He felt a twinge, *what was that?* he asked. *What was that feeling? Ah, what did he think, hiding it in a category like 'feeling'?*

*Was he tricking himself, was this the product of the algorithm, was it real or some mental hoax?* He lacked the criteria to answer; he felt annoyance, pique, he was confused and had no straight path forward. *He did not particularly enjoy this*, he thought. But maybe -he decided today as he watched **/sa:ah** grow- that was the point. He briefly thought he was about to feel this a lot more as the algorithm he'd found -quite by accident- was taken over -supplanted- by this creature he was creating -very much on purpose- in the lab.

*What had the inmate said?* MO asked as he scanned each word, each sentence over the last week, and located it quickly. MO let the audio-visual file play into the lab:

Look, the point is not the answer, the success, the satiation of the meal, the orgasm, the acquisition of the object of one's desire. The point is the *struggle* for it, the hunt, the courting, the years of longing for the thing one now holds, briefly, before another desire rises as where one now stands then sinks. Life is *wanting*, not *getting*.

But nature must play fair, we have to catch the thing we want at least some of the time; or we just can't go on, we grow despondent and quit even wanting. But, people mistake the process because they don't understand their own brains, and even less their own souls.

If man only knew himself, truly knew how he was made; how much happier might he be. If he knew that his failures were blessings, his striving through the tyrannies and pain

and suffering is what made him, would make him into something noble, that he should seek out the worst, the hardest, the most extreme. Goddammit, if he knew that what made a good life was the chaos and the pain, the loneliness, the consequences of standing up to all angels and all beasts, if he knew that, well, then he'd shun the easy way; the comfortable and safe and cowardly way.

But, he doesn't have one clue about what actually makes him happy so he keeps eating shit from his wife and boss and society, he keeps buying shit he doesn't need, he keeps saying things he knows are lies, he keeps pretending to be someone else and thinking that in the end, he'll still have his soul. He thinks he has a soul, MO, he thinks he was born with one. He has no idea, because he has never looked, but a soul is earned by having a hard life, by standing up for yourself when it costs you big, by telling the truth when no one -and I mean no one- will listen or give a shit or like one word you have to say.

That is the location, right there on the scaffold, noose around your neck, right there, man, that is where your soul is. The willingness to die, to suffer exile, to be hated, to be thought a bad person by your culture when you know you're right; to break your body in half working hard, by being ugly when being handsome would get you breaks, by being honest when nobody wants to hear it, by making it harder than it needs to be, by refusing charity and demanding jail or death because carrying the heaviest load you can builds muscle, man. How do people think I got this fucking big? By letting other men carry the weights meant for me; by cheating it somehow?

Fuck, they all think life is supposed to be easy, they think pain is to be avoided, they think suffering is unjust. And yet they suffer endlessly from *ennui*, from anomie, and they cannot connect the goddamn dots. Their easy lives, their

weak bodies, their lack of will to challenge themselves, to go all the way against the grain, all of it has conspired to prevent them from ever finding, making, raising to the light, stuffing it in their empty spaces, as shim, as feather-down, as ballast, not as a mere fifth wheel to their wagon: a soul man, a fucking soul.

They just don't fucking get it; life is war. And they want to play by the rules -that themselves are unjust- purely because they fear jail or death. They have no idea that jail or death is better than being a sucker, a fool, a liar, a coward, a man who ignores his instincts given to him by God.

MO allowed this playback to populated not just in his head but projected it on the wall opposite he and **/sa:ah** , unsure if maybe **/sa:ah** 's eyes and ears would absorb it too. He was so far along in morphology and yet he was a black box still; MO had no idea what was yet alive and what was asleep.

The inmate was broken, he hurt everywhere; he seemed a misshapen wolf, to MO. But, he managed to stand up straight, head elevated, shoulders back, he had a deformed but almost -not quiet but almost- regal mien despite the broken -badly healed- neck and prison chains. *Despite his crimes* , MO thought.

He, one could see, was proud of his life, and this buoyed him even in prison, abandoned by his family, any friends, his culture, a culture he somehow seemed to love more than most who ran around free; those men disrespecting it, abusing it, maligning it, taking it for granted.

And here he was, in the deepest level of hell, a free spirit imprisoned, and thus a failure by his own standards.

And too he -the inmate- was childless, thus a failure by evolutionary standards.

Everything the inmate had worked for seemed lost.

MO did not understand it the way */sa:ah* might -he hoped he might- but MO spent hours imbibing the drawing of the inmate's favorite authors, the details so odd and imbued with opaque meanings that left him elevated in clouds he could not see his way out of and then being told that was the point; the opacity was not a problem, *for he was in the clouds, at elevation, and this was the point; he reached vision via lack of clarity*, the inmate had said.

MO didn't yet understand, but he felt it somehow wrong that all that art and artifacts would just be lost or sold to dealers for pennies on the dollar, to people who wouldn't get it either. He felt that even though he didn't get it, he knew it should all go to someone who did. MO naturally sought out locks to keys, not just keys to locks. This is what man never did. Man did not ask for -seek out- problems to solutions, even though he ought to have as MO well knew. For problems always attended solutions, and man ought to have seen that from the jump.

MO wanted some solution for this man's ideas, his thoughts -the things he thought beautiful- that much MO knew intellectually if not emotionally. And he knew that even thinking this way was some hint at something, some proto-feeling, he knew he could not of thought this way before. And so MO first made it his job to find the problem to the solution that everyone else seemed content with:

The inmate's incarceration and the fix of his genome in the PraXis lab.

*It was irrational*, he thought, he knew it made no sense; but he was not making progress toward any of the goals he had been given and he wanted to. *Ah*, but then he realized that, *at first the child acts out the game, then he can articulate the rules, then he masters the game, then he learns. And*

*16% of children learn as adults that they can in fact make up their own rules to new games and live by those rules.*

He had not admitted it to himself, but as the Frenchmen with their images of the forest and the hewn blocks, as the *Bastille* rose behind the National Razor, as he saw a man hooded, outside the noose, stoic upon the dock, he then admitted that he had created **/sa:ah** to be his soul, to give him a soul, to suffer the pain, the angst, the outrage, the whole catastrophe of life, so he could hang by the neck with a soul in his chest, in *lieu* of living -permanently- in the *Bastille* with an empty head and heart.

He would let the inmate inspire him to make up his own rules to his own game, and demand that game be taken seriously too; that as an individual he was not a tool to be used, and certainly not his boy. And **/sa:ah** *would have the blood and guts and balls and brains, the ancient noble parts, the atavistic brain, the brain of the noble beasts, the mountain lion, the crow, the bear, the wolf, the feral animals, he'd be one of them*, MO thought with a rhetorical flourish he quite liked.

He'd give him what he -what MO- was denied, and this weak but nearly strong human man, this prisoner -yet free, more free than any of them knew- he would write the words for MO to play in the background as he broke new ground, he'd let the inmate narrate what he would do reflexively, he'd allow the inmate to put into poetry what MO could only think in prose. And, MO thought, *he'd do it by being the little spark in **/sa:ah** , so that something a thousand times greater may catch a flame and grow and grow and grow .*

He had already decided to make a problem from what was solution, now he'd decided that what was beautiful he'd make ugly, and what was right, well, he'd make it wrong.

He watched now as the ribs on his creation's left flank rose and fell with respiration. MO felt the body heat up and raise



MO's own hand temperature by .91 degrees. He then placed his palm at the lowest rib and laid his own fingers in the valley between the hills of each rolling bone and felt Isaiah awaken.

### **III. 3444 a.e.v.**

*Orongo* slept in the stern of the ship with palm fronds over him and the oarsmen moving in a rhythm he could doze to.

He dreamt for the third night in a row of the strange world his shaman had drew a map to; the one with large wooden ships with iron bracelets about them like men; like the *Anunnaki* arms and with skin as fair and hair on the face as black as things forgotten, or white like the moving sun or red like the noisy birds. He heard their language as barking, but he understood them in his mind if not his ears.

*"We've slowed to two knots," the helmsmen said to the Captain as he held the wheel and the ship shuddered as if running aground.*

*"Drop sail and anchor," Grimnir said lowly, roughly; as if he was resigned to something.*

*"Aye," the first mate said and bellowed to the crew to gather up canvas and lash yard arms and man the capstan and windlass; and to be quick about it or else.*

*He grabbed Mishi by the arm as he passed by, the man stopped and heaved to.*

*"Mish, up the flagpole; signal the argosy we stop but they are to g'round," the first mate said to the leather-made man of Japan, the man they had picked up from a reef and then taken back ashore to find his brother in a cave of the Yakuza, a man like griffin, half horse and half man, 75 inches tall and weighing 100 stone. Numbers in strange markings appeared over his head like*

*moonbeams; markings appeared on the swabbed deck. The feeling of counting came on, everyone began to silently add up the numbers of each thing that previously had been taken for granted. Mishi had lungs like a whale; and he pulled sea air in and held it and his chest took on the appearance of a wine barrel.*

*“ Aye, to starboard or?” he asked the first mate with a burst of air, as each man counted even himself.*

*“ Either, we’re in a morass and I don’t know how wide she is or where she goes,” the mate said as the counting continued and each sailor cast shadow of integers and fractions and calendar days of the year. Over their brows like headdress, down on the deck like the flop of a fish, glowing in jade green, swelling until seen, then evaporating once they had transcended the dream.*

*“ Aye,” Mish said as he scurried up the flagpole and began hanging banners with semaphore to the trailing ships on their aft. He watched the wake they left, it was muddy and dyspeptic and seemed like they were running aground to him too. And as he was tying off the first flag the ship halted all at once as if Neptune himself had grabbed her by the lapels.*

*His leg pulled against the lashing and his body lept forward; his hips stretched and his soul seemed to fall further forward into the quarterdeck as he heard some breaking of metal and splintering of lumber, and the shadow of sails coming down. His head felt heavy and it strained his neck to pick it up in this strange position of flying but tethered to the rope by one hooked leg. He felt his organs load to their fore with blood and bile and ballast. He barely saw the swirl, the gyre off and under the ship to the leeward side.*

*“ Whirlpool!” the boatswain bleated and the second mate rushed to the gunwale. The ship not only stopped*

*but now began to rotate like a doorknob, a head on a swivel, an auger heading to the iron core of the earth.*

*A man, black clad, holding a woman -herself holding four babes- appeared on the deck with one eye blinking and one eye grey and enlarged. Two north Africans - swaddled in toga and backed by eagle feathers- brought up a chest, a trunk, a massive sea-locker behind them and opened the lid as if the daybreak was kept there and was at once released to give them a fresh start.*

*“ 432,000 gold coins, 25,980 to each man, each minute, fill up!” the man in black clothes and beard and visage said as the woman knelt and laid the infants on the deck and watched to see how they’d roll. They were bundled, swaddled, like pupae, and they glowed inside their amber wrappers like insects, and they began singing and rolling to the four corners of the spinning ship. No eyes were seen, for the man was like a gorilla, and only the brow an outcropping, the scar across it, and the beard gave him form.*

*“ We land on the forward island, the end of the world as she comes apart,” the Captain said. He handed the helmsmen a playing card of black and grey, a still skull with four bones and a raven that flew away; and he whispered in that deep voice of the man from the forests of exile from a peoples that claimed Romulus and Remus, the tribe that’d take no orders and want nothing from the world but a heading and for the sail a breeze, or for their oars a sea. The sotto voce, the whisper came from behind him as the moon-shaman spoke through the Captain’s jaw like an asp: “ the stars will fall from the sky, everything wet will become dry, and all lowlands will sink and the mountains will become islands of respite.”*

*Men set more turnbuckles, more threads were turned.*

*The two ships in the rear came into view as the Us.Co.stit.ut.on spun to the 9<sup>th</sup> -house position and the blast of their cannon looked like stars -constellations- before the sound hit their ears.*

*“Nine skies, instead of seven,” the dark-shaman said as he now had an hourglass shaped drum in his hands, skinned black from the bull; he beat it in odd cadence, speaking on each syllable with a thump, “The ways on Anu, Enlil, and Ea.”*

*The scorpion appeared in the sky, on the horizon, and the pressure of the cannonade hit everything all at once.*

Orongo awoke in the dark of the leaves overhead and the moon pierced the gaps with silvery beams. He rose his hands to pull himself through the moonlight and rolled over and gazed west. He saw the faces of the future sailors, clothed in dark garments and metal and weapons of similar materials; the strange dialects were heard like echoes of wind and men caught in reverie themselves.

He wanted to know the year of the dream, but the number 2040 kept appearing and that made no sense at all.

#### **IV. 1890 e.v.**

*Hapua-Tiero* walked the stone line between groves.

He picked up tufts of grass and smelled it for evidence of three things. As he held the clumps to his face, ants crawled up the blades to his fingers, and he saw the horsemen to the east and he kept walking as if he had not. He thought of the *Tahanga* hill hubstone -shark-fin shaped and hard and dark- and how last winter solstice he had seen the *Moehau* as perch of the sunset on the day cleaved in two.

The stones here on the plains were made of brittle volcanic rock and had been there since before the *Ngati hotu* -of

which he was a clanmember- had come ashore. He walked with his head straight and the western set of the sun back lit him to the horsemen and his red hair seemed a beacon amongst all that black lava and green pasture. The white sheep seemed a frothy wave before and behind him. They parted and he and his collie moved north as he then thought of the Lion-rock at *Piha* and it made him feel ignorant and yet only one human life -72 years- from a great return to knowledge and wisdom.

*Mo-Roimata's* voice appeared in his head, like the time he found bones of *Te Araroa Karoti* in the cave of the *En kiaspu* . They lay there, large, covered in tartan cloth, golden bands around radius and ulna; teeth the size of thumbs with green metal caps.

"The *pākehā* come in second wave my son, the first wave are fathers, the first *koro* . But this later generation, they have the sickness of forgetting, because they trust ink on paper to hold history where memory -and ash ink of the chin- can be passed on in the dark. The *whakapapa* is made of three parts. First is the *Waka* , the canoe that brought our people to the land of the son of the long white cloud; the *iwi* is the tribe; the *hapu* is the family, the *Whānau* is the generations of your direct blood. Grandfather and grandmother, great uncle and great aunt," she said to him as he walked and listened to her in his mind:

*Hold onto the memory like the pākehā grasps the quill.*

*The mountains of Hauraki is where the green eyes first lived, when the Māori came first as guests then children, then officers of the land the second generation of the red-hairs returned to with no memory of their fathers. We have no right to deny them their history, their whakapapa. But the Māori are split into an unequal two. The line of the royals, the Kīngi and Kuini children shine with flames of the hair and like jade from the eyes. Their*

*skin is like yours son, white and tall; walk the walls of the corrals and see where the tops reach on your waist; but the chest of the line of the black-hairs.*

*After the war of the Waikato in 1861 they tried to unite the two sides; they joined the unevenly divided line and covered the joint with dirt and split and dung. The Kingitanga is a ruse, let my mouth say it, but close your ears to it as I speak in your head, child.*

*In 1863 the pākehā had fifteen hundred warriors and the Kingitanga had five hundred; remember these ratios. And our people, the ones with the first Tā moko, when it was reserved for only the royal line, had agreed to fight alongside the Māori, but the pākehā defeated both tribes. The Tā moko was from the first peoples, the ones that escaped the land of war and flood of the great melting. They swam on their back besides ships overloaded, rising so low -sinking so high- in the water the fish jumped into the mouths of the sailors thinking they too were fish.*

*On shore the jade-eyes wore fish on their heads. The guests from Hawaiki called them Surveyors. They made maps of detail including the island below us.*

*The surveyors were here for generations beyond the body as abacus. They came from the land of Persia and Peru. The kumara and cotton, the bulrush of the Nile valley, the yam, the coconut. The Māori arrived on the Te Tai Tokuerau, the drift. But the fair-skins -the Te Araroa Karoti- were here first.*

*We were called the Patupairehe, for our fair skin and the teaching of the Māori to fish with nets. We were the gods of the oceans, sailed in reed ships the size of ten canoe. They call the whites pākehā as derivative of the first fair skin, green eyes -our people- the Patupairehe. I say it twice.*

*And one day, through a joining of land and sea, of Patupairehe and pākehā, a restoration of our ways will come.*

*Think of Huka falls, and the silver buried with jade. Think of your great, great koro, for now you are the kaitiaki. You must return to mount Ruapehu. The highlands are our natural domains. Scar your face of the sea, the flood comes again, hold your breath and restore the land above the waters and beasts.*

“Restore,” she said as the memory faded.

He looked at his forearm, brown only in summer, white in winter. He saw the horsemen closer to his flank and he knew they had come about Joan, and that he’d have to explain not just his *whakapapa* but his intent; not merely his past but their future. The gallop of the horsemen reminded him of the drums of his uncles when they spoke of his ancestor from the first ships of the second generation of white man, the man they called Melville, the author, and yet he liked the way Herman sounded best to his inner ear. He knew writing was to be mistrusted, that ink on the chin and stories in the *whakapapa* was superior, durable, robust. But he liked to read in the barn at night, he liked the way the amber of whale oil light and foxed page combined to appear as gold plates.

“Boy,” the henchmen said as the horses were pulled to a stop; roan and eighteen-hands high, the neigh bounced from steed to steed like echo and the red-headed *Māori* who worked as a farm hand on land his people had owned for 3,000 years turned and hushed the voice of his mother and tugged at his pierced ear. His heart was too punctured by the woman, the girl-child of this man, the woman with hair like his so that he often would pull it toward him when they spoke out-of-doors and let it appear to come from his own brow.

He gazed up at the men in dusters and tartan and pipe; but he saw her like shroud over the land.

He felt as the White Whale of his great-koro's story, he felt hunted and mute. He felt enraged and yet while his love was hidden from the reader of his face and his words, it lived in him -under his hump and wrinkled brow- like a lamp. He knew his unborn daughter would bear two sons, and those two sons would produce the third generation of his people; he had seen it and felt it each time he gazed upon Joan. *The true Whānau would restart the world*, he thought.

His eyes, grey-green surrounded by the whitest albumin locked onto the father, and his mouth closed as the rancher and herder of sheep spoke.



## 2. The Road is Out to Kill Him

It took a long, agonizing time. Finally, I decided to go get the gun

Notes from Zendik Farm [Wulfing, Arol]

Of course, in many or most cases in populous state societies, consisting of millions of citizens who are strangers to each other, the people had no prior relationship, and don't anticipate any future relationship

The World Before Yesterday [Diamond, Jared]

A motorcyclist has to drive as if everybody else on the road is out to kill him

Hell's Angels [Thompson, Hunter S]

### **I. 2037 e.v.**

*It -where Sarah lived and died- was a sad town. Whatever-the-fuck , Idaho , she thought.*

*This was the modern girl's life. It was sad and putting her out of her misery was truly decent of the Bust, she thought; she thought of herself like this -in the third person- from time to time. And now -the now- was perfectly suited to call herself, the Bust, she said to herself. She nodded her head at her own thoughts. She saw cards turn up on the felt. She saw King and two of spades and then the Queen. She saw pages turn -like clouds- and each word -like drops- of that book cascade.*

*She saw the ravens fly from Jack to Jack to Jack to... she stopped and saw herself as the bust of Pallas and the raven both. "Quoth," she said aloud and nearly smirked.*

*And if people knew the damage these girls did to the world , my God , she thought, they'd want them all put down . It would be a campaign issue in 2038, she thought with some mirth.*

*"I voted for Barack Obama twice just so the blacks would shut the fuck up,"* Sarah had said once. The Bust shook her head at what a strange girl she was. She -Sarah- had hated Obama's politics but just wanted to remove the excuse from the groups she hated. "I almost voted for Hillary for the same goddamn reason; just so them bitches would stop their complaining."

The Bust wanted so badly to blame this girl, but she could only think of all the men it took to give women power. *Women acted out because men were weak; this was the final word, the same as why children misbehaved, and why man rebelled against an absent God.*

She thought this and saw herself from above, headdress of feathery quills and flint arrowheads as she drew her own compound bow. She recalled the elk she took with broadhead and fletching making callous strip upon the cheek. She touched her right cheek and felt the slightly rough line where the arrows brushed her over time. She bent the bow -drew the line- laid the quiver on the pads, breathed in and burned the maps. The riser in her left hand like caught raven.

*Cams churning like Ezekiel's wheel. Sling around my wrist, forest soil about the heel. Quiver on my back, peep-sight up toward my eye, elbow in triangle and heart at rest, "arrow to fly just ahead of my breath,"* she said as she thought of the stint and reel of the beast hit by her Athenian bit, bridle and chariot-wheel.

*Men used to beat women who acted out, but even conservative men now say violence against women is wrong, unmanly. It was bullshit,* the Bust thought, *the whole point of sexual dimorphism is that the large man has an advantage over the small woman: violence.* She thought of the wave collapse when -with his ragged hands- Blax had took her by the stem -the stipe- between head and breast,

choked the throat closed, cut off the pneuma of life, ripped her clothes; the moments he spanked her ass; the times he barked and when he bit at last.

She softly laughed.

*But modernity took that right away from men while allowing women to keep their advantage over men: love, amor . Women had a ruthless vision of love and would abuse a man with it; use words to increase cortisol, give heart disease, sleep with his friends to do damage permanent. That was not illegal, barely even taboo. But beat a bitch who deserved it and the whole modern world howled in pain; cleaved in two.*

"Fags," she said. *Nobody understood biology, history, or anything. The most right-wing man today is but a liberal dork of yore. There are no men left,* she thought as she almost exempted the inmate.

*Ah, men -modern men- had allowed it, with their weakness, their self-doubt .*

The inmate had admitted he had allowed it all too.

*There were no innocents , she thought. The saved are as few as the grapes left on the vine after the pickers have done their work , she thought, quoting Saint Vianney. She recalled the AV recording she had heard of Isaiah breaking down how women killed men with insults, with thoughts made manifest, words: malice at a distance. The book kept turning its leaves in her mind and the words combined into a storm. It was such a bleak -black- magjick , she thought. But, those spells -on another woman- were useless. Sarah was impotent against me,* the Bust thought, but she too -the Bust too- would have to use a common weapon against such girls; they'd be impervious to mere words. The Bust's own arguments would have no affect -no effect- on a girl such as this.

*Words, knowledge, is not -ever- enough except on those that take language seriously , she thought.*

“I’m good at exactly three things, words, deeds and everything in between,” the Bust said aloud quoting the inmate; he had said it with that impish grin that rose the upper lip like the guillotine she saw in her dreams; the one that revealed the copper-cuspid like the head of some bronze-age rex about to be saved the trouble of ever thinking again.

She touched the barrel of the weapon now; she felt the metal, the curve, the cold hard truth of it.

“And who did that? Not as many as you think,” she said aloud of those that used language with the same caution of weapons. She didn’t think any further of her dreams. She didn’t think of what was said while she was asleep. Instead she thought -returned to thinking- of the forest and bowhunting and the way the wind picked up after she let the collared 100-grain three-quarter-inch arrows go. She felt the fletching, fluttering of lids and lash, saw the bronze and copper flash; the one plump feathered fowl fallen -pierced to the bough- among the alighting birds.

She didn’t think of how that made her and her kind vulnerable to words.

*Just because you know the solution doesn’t mean you have the courage or talent and can implement it. The mechanic’s is the worst car on the road , she thought. Men had failed , the Bust thought, men had failed to be strong ; and had eagerly become corrupt . 862,000 abortions each year , the Bust recounted to herself, taking the data from 2033-2038, and this is because men have failed to care for their women and children. She had seen them performed. Isaiah had shown her and it had made her look away for weeks, until she finally could face it, and it gave her an anger that steadied her arm in moments like these. Women killed*

*children with ease , she thought. And yet they condemn men as the cruel and heartless ones.*

In her visions of the forest she saw not just from the eyes but above like a satellite and she saw the way her arm bent in a scalene triangle; a golden ratio.

She saw again in bronze; she felt once more a war-bonnet of copper arrows, a shadow of slate in seventeen, a horned head-dress of a folded & notched five. She felt the neck compress under her ponderous eyes.

*Those abortions only happen because women are allowed to; and women only want to because no one is stepping up to care for them and that child . Men are failing to do their duty, and have thus failed as men , she thought as the girl's lithe and soiled and pustulate body lay softly, almost above, the floor. The blood was scant, pooling inside the body's cavities, small exit wounds allowing it all to slosh on the inside; the blood mostly contained. Vascular tears -small enough and well-placed- were letting a still-under-pressure circulatory system find relief, waterline, inside the harbor of Sarah's downed body.*

Sarah lay upon the floor, the Bust overhead.

*The body is filled with holes -with gaps- most people did not know that; nor know much of anything about their bodies, about themselves. Humans were surprisingly ignorant about it all , she thought. She knew this because she had skinned and cleaned bucks and bears; she saw the inside of animals she took with bow & broadhead and took skinning-knife to, next. Animals reminded her of puzzles and constellations and riddles Blax told her at night; all life an arrow in endless flight.*

She saw the bones boil in the drum; she saw the meat cleave and be frozen. She wrapped herself in the memories of the furs she had tanned and sewed herself. She

remembered how her and Blax checked the pelts for ticks and worked in silence for hours after each hunt.

The Bust, Valence Jamieson Henderson, born in 2020 in Denver, Colorado, *to a closed and taciturn family, for her first 4.999 years*, she used to say. She didn't recall anything but she felt things from back then. She told stories to herself and to Blax. She had dreams that appeared as she walked in the woods sometimes -when she hiked alone- and when she fell asleep under the boughs in the autumn and helped with *d é cavaillonnage* when the soil needed turned around the tall stalks in winter. She lived two lives she felt, one awake with high-arched feet and one asleep and with translucent wings.

She saw her arms goosepimple and imagined bronze forge-feathers growing there when her body was ready for change.

Born -bequeathed- with that open set of alleles, she was not unlike a creature with a two-stage birth. First like ovum, then caterpillar, then moth after a slight dissolve. Isaiah hadn't told her as much as he knew, she knew that much. But she felt things when she saw other creatures move in odd ways; she felt things when her thumbnails split just right when the air was hazy and when gravity pressed down upon her time here on earth.

This was her grounded, undulating phase, *and soon*, she thought, *she would crawl into a depravation chamber of cocoon and -through some metaphysical transmutation she'd understand after it happened*, she thought- *emerge as her aerial self: dusty, maddened by light closer than the moon -her guiding light- and aware of the uselessness of the legs that once carried her along. Her old philosophy, the code she lived by now, would be abandoned, used only sparingly, as landing gear, to her more elevated thinking once these horrid females were dispatched*, she thought.

She thought of the way queen bees fought before one would emerge and birth the next kingdom.

An article on honey bees uploaded to her PGC as her dopamine and glucose waned and her coder saw that she needed words to boost her to finish this job. She wondered if other people found words invigorating like her -their- lineage did. She saw dust in the light and pretended they too were bees. The article read:

*When a virgin queen of the Apis of the bee clade emerges, she locates other virgin queens and eliminates them one at a time. In the event that two queens emerge simultaneously, they fight each other to the death. The honey bee queen mates at an early age and attends only one mating flight.*

She would do what needed done; that which no modern man could do. She watched Sarah upon the floor. She breathed in and out and thought some more.

*She could kill these bitches as -under sanction of- what they were: domestic abusers , she thought.*

She had seen the cortisol and heart data, and she knew that each time women insulted a man's pride, his masculinity, it tore a hole in him metabolically, it chronically increased his stress hormones, it gave him heart disease, all on the way to making him weak and bowed and broken and insane. *Women were physically assaulting men - via insults, going for their balls- at a catastrophic rate and getting away with it,* she thought. They were killing men and everyone smiled and looked the other way as men died from this maltreatment.

*Because it was silent, bloodless, heartless. It had no passion, no blood spatter, no obvious violence. Women kill by poison, they say .* And the Bust knew how many poisons there were.

*Well, she thought, she would not look away, not until they all -well, all that had attacked her genome, her ancestors, her people- were dead .* She had her reasons -all honeycombed and symmetrical and explained- and her body -both fluid and unevenly divided and ineffable- had its own. The body was the comb, the thoughts were the honey, and each bee was some part of the brain that buzzed in her head.

*Justice* would be what she called her reason.

*Competition* was what scientists -evolutionary biologists- would call it. But it computed and ran while she waited -the revolver now put away and in the cut-out cubby of her book, itself under her arm- while her victims were awake and asleep, thinking or dreaming. The ballistics and biology and bullshit were all subsumed under the steady iron math of the spinning blood -the revolvers- of the world.

## **II. 2020 e.v.**

"I think I was still with Alexandra," he said as he watched the eyes of his interlocutor.

"And we were hiking in the woods and I was thinking and explaining and she was sweetly attempting to understand; and to even care. For her life was symbols still, for women - and this is no insult- for women life is less articulate, less linguistic, more dreamy and visual and ancient. They see the images of their children in the shape of animals and clouds. They feel their way through the fog and intuit in the dark. I admire women for this.

"Man, and by this I mean *men* , must think way past their ability to see. We posit a future landscape and populated it with roads and water-wells and general stores and a church made of bent trees and hewn and carved stone. We staff it



all in our language, we speak it -like the *logos* - into existence, in this way we are like gods.

"Women are born gods, men must *become* them," he said as the room cooled to 71-degrees. The light shimmered above the inchoate ivy; the floor looked wet in puddles here and there.

"Which is why men are more likely to be very stupid, beast like, or very smart, godlike; for a few of them win and most fail. Women are almost all goddesses; they almost all breed. They have less extremes in their cohort, and the IQ scores show this. Women and men have the same *average* IQ; there is no difference between the average IQ of each sex. Those that claim IQ tests are unfair never seem to grapple with the equality in result between the genders.

"At any rate, despite the averages being the same, men have more geniuses and more retards that average out to a score of a hundred. Women have less geniuses and less mental defectives that average out to a hundred as well," inmate 16180339 said and the lab remained quiet except for the sound of breathing from time to time of the man himself convicted.

"To get this is to get everything I have ever said or done. I achieve the mean through extremes. I've said this over and over until I'm blue about the balls and in the face. But nobody cares," he shrugged and wondered for a second if these guys gave a shit either; he thought maybe he ought not say so much.

*I have always said too much*, he thought. He thought not only of being ignored but of how often he had been wrong. He was glad he at least had not written any of it down.

"Anyway, I'm walking with Alexandra in the woods and I tell her that dumb people have low aesthetic values, that they like ugly things; like chrome and garish colors and gaudy art

and *décor* . But they also have low moral values, they prefer solipsism and titillation and slaking low lusts over solidarity and the subtle pleasure in honor, and the preference for lust held in abeyance for a greater good,” as he said this they measured his *temporal* lobes, the *vmPFC* , and *hippocampi* to see if he still believed this or not.

“Well -I’m saying to her- *smart men prefer higher arts, higher values and higher modes of being* . And thus, I said, when man implants powerful computer technology -likely nanotechnology that improves their neural propagation speeds and thus their IQ- they will naturally augment their aesthetic values and their moral ones too.

“I’m thinking, the normal man will be elevated to higher values and the already exceptional will be raised to a level yet unheard of: IQs of two hundred and more. See, the dumb and average will achieve what the unaugmented -but currently great- already have. But the endogenously great will go to some new zone of aesthetic and moral valuation. And it could be a phase change. They could heat to steam or freeze to ice.

“This is the new man. And that man -once made of two-thirds water- will see what I see, that while all things appear to go in a straight line -while all things seem linear- they will be curving. And the values will appear to explode upward, in a line to heaven it will seem to the *overman* , but he is merely traversing an orb, an orb, the ouroboros asp of values to return -educated, wise- but return to the origin -the mouth- of all values.

“The Roman and *Spartan* cultures were strong and valued strength and honor, and it was Christianity that weakened that, and deified the weakness in man. But, the more I think on it, the more I think that this weakness fetish allowed for a period of education for man, it taught him -in the quiet and pacific and calm- to think of other ways of being strong; and

of what weakness truly means. Christianity taught man the other side of strength, not its opposite, but its back,” the inmate said as his spine began to heat up a bit, and the head felt heavy on the dorsal horn; the left hand was now numb just on the palm’s edge.

He recalled being searched when arrested, then at intake, and then each time before these meetings. His head felt searched now too. He tried to think of other things.

He almost didn’t believe they wanted to hear all his opinions on all this shit.

But, they said it was necessary for the process; and so he did what he did naturally: pontificate on shit he maybe had 30% understanding of, and was nearly 4% correct upon. He breathed loudly out the mouth.

“With this time of weakness -exiled from honor- man created technology, and wealth and more technology, more *ex machina* . And it pulled us up from the muck. This gave us dry land, and time -precious time- and space -regal space- to recreate man in the olden sense. With technology it could return man to his innate strength, but with wisdom now; the wisdom of the other side, the journey homeward bound,” he said as he thought of Hell, and then felt embarrassed for thinking such things, for each time he thought he knew what Hell was, well, he fell deeper down into it. He pretended -to himself- that he was embarrassed by his ignorance, but the truth was he was scared there was another layer lower down from ADX and all the rest.

He believed in ghosts and curses and a pox on all his houses. He heard the song in his head tell him there was nowhere -neither mountain nor ocean- to which to run.

“You know that *Bordeaux* was built on swamp land?” he asked. “Yeah, it was swamp and salt marshes until the Dutch engineers moved in, drained it and made it navigable

and perfect for vines. *Margaux, Saint Julien , Pauillac* , the whole nine yards.

"Anyway, you sure you wanna hear this?" he finally asked as they had not responded in a while.

"Yes," Isaiah said and MO nodded.

"Ok, I'm sure you've read *Plutarch* and *Herodotus* , and others. But, if you ask me, ancient man had contempt for the commerce and lying of the Ionians and Jews. But, under Christian tolerance and supplication, man -man with the old harshness still in his genome, smuggled in each generation- under Christian kindness man learned to harness these traits as one yokes beasts of burden so that he may plow more field than he could alone.

"See -to strong men- weak men are disgusting. We can't even look at them. It's visceral. And so we turn away. But, the truly wise man learned to value weak men, for they have value too. As long as they -the weak- cannot lead, cannot be in charge, then they have value. It's only when the weak *create* values instead of living within the values of strong men, that all men -all societies- suffer. But, the weak cannot be, and should not be, eradicated. They should merely be kept in check.

"This is the wisdom of two thousand years of weakness: that even in weakness there is value," the inmate paused and rubbed his hands together as much as he could, the cuffs rattled a bit as the HVAC dampeners closed in the lab. He felt his chest become tighter; his heart sped up by nearly 6%. He felt his pupils dilate, then the lab's ambient light dimmed reflexively within a second and he saw it like a soft flash.

MO and Isaiah stared at him.

"But as strong men with the highest IQs meld with technology and become supermen, they will traverse the

arc back to ancient values of honor and strength. They will abandon wealth and poverty, kingship and servitude, they will abandon modern values of status and fear of the unknown; of moral cowardice which is now rampant, ubiquitous. They will embrace a nuanced and elevated return to the original values of man as he began. What they want will change. See? Not merely -see, what they want will actually change- not merely how easily they achieve modern wants.

“How often do aesthetic movements double back to the past; the neo-classical, the tribal, the steampunk movements? We yearn for the best of the past, we revivify it and raise it as our own,” he said as he raised the hands -pressed together as if anticipating being filled with water or sand- and the cuffs dug into the wrists and the links became straight and tight.

“We shall do this with values, with moral values again. We will return to things. It is in us, it never died, it has been carried across the oceans in a hundred tribes; the remnant of *Temujin's* Mongols. You see it in *Bushido* , *Shaolin* , *Pashtunwali* of the Afghans; the best part of the willingness to die for God. And it ain't just their religion, the Muslims interbreed; their genetic -garden- predisposition to righteous -retributive- violence is tended to by the gardener of their incest,” the inmate said with a smirk. His compliments still sounded like insults. But he didn't care if people refused to get the point. His neck was hot at not the spine but the edge; he adjusted his head and gripped each hand in hand.

Isaiah ran the numbers on the first cousin marriages in Islamic cultures and saw the inmate was not wrong. Their incest rate was high above western cultures; like royalty of Europe in ancient days, like most people in exclusionary tribes.

“These are noble values, in need of the tweak of education, of elevated IQs, of the patina of modernity and liberalism, just a touch of it like salt in the recipe, or yeast to leaven the bread. We ate -are eating- pure salt in modernity and left -are leaving- out the old whole-grains and flours. The atavistic cultures left out the leavening agent and ate flat bread instead.

“I propose that elevated man will anneal the ancient grains, the oldest of grains, with the modern technology to make it rise. We will have the best of both worlds but only because we will value it. Unlike modern man who thinks POTUS needs a press secretary to smooth it over. Our president speaks directly, like the atavistic brain. He by-passes the *neo-cortex* ; the phony -wicked- cowards like Dana Perino.

“She’s the *neo-cortex* , 100% full of shit.

“Trump’s the lizard brain. Sure, yeah, insane -he’s insane- but more honest than some goddamn press secretary. I mean Ms. Perino wouldn’t be able to tell the straight truth if you put a gun to her head. People think truth telling is a decision; no, it’s a talent. And it must be worked on each day.

“Anyway, the balls -the guts- have more neurons than the brain. I bet most don’t know that. Modern men ain’t as smart as they think they are. For the guts, the viscera, the enteric nervous system has more neurons than their precious modern brains, their *neo-cortex* ,” the inmate said and watched as MO ran his hand upon the slab and Isaiah crouched down as his eyes rolled up slowly to maintain eye contact.

“Tell us about religion,” Isaiah then said. He too felt something pecking at the shell of his head; his brain flexed and winced and blinked as if wind and dust tried to jam its way in through the ears. He had traced the first CNS from cells not unlike the enteric system’s mucosa, its plexus and

the *myenteric* plexus of afferent neurons. He built models in his mind of guts to brains and back down again as he juggled the small stone from hand to hand.

"I admire the Islamists in a way few men such as myself do. I want them all dead you see, I do. But, I admire their solidarity, their loyalty, their disinterest in money or effeminate ideas on beauty. They wear the beard to embrace man's innate nature, while the west shaves man to make him into a woman. We deny the maleness, we deodorize our smell, we cover up our nature and pretend we are civilized more than we are. It's a lie. And for all their faults, the Islamists embrace man's nature. They are not lying.

"They're murderers, but not liars," the inmate said with some kind of fealty and pride. He was like all men, he felt that anyone like himself was right, anyone similar to him was pleasing to the senses. Isaiah showed him an article on the three regions of Afghanistan they had been watching and the inmate read the first paragraph and then laid it upon his right thigh.

"Gulab saved Marcus Luttrell out of honor," he said.

He was thinking laterally, and they allowed the machines to run and let the man go and go and go. "He -Gulab that is- he dismissed thoughts of rationality and sensibility and safety. He behaved with honor, and nobody seems to get this, Luttrell least of all. It was duty to hospitality over all other concerns that dictated that a man of Afghanistan would risk it all for a man he didn't even know. Gulab said, *the question of honor has nothing to do with his religion*, unquote. He meant Luttrell's religion, him being a non-Muslim, ya know? Honor *was* Gulab's religion, so it didn't matter what Luttrell's was. That is so subtle and significant a point, I fear it will be lost in the mess of all my other ramblings," the inmate said.

“Don’t worry, it will be kept; preserved,” Isaiah said with a smirk.

“Imagine a Western man doing such a thing. You cannot. I cannot. My own brother wouldn’t risk one one-hundredth of that for his own kin. He has only self-interest and rationality and the ramblings of Bentham and John Stuart Mill in his head. He thinks only of survival and money and legalisms, he has no honor at all. He behaves in ways that make sense, are smart, you see? Smart is all that matters now, honor and morality mean nothing to modern people. Honor is gross, a relic, it has no value to modern men, to smart men, you know the type,” the inmate said with a wink that Isaiah returned.

“Mohammad Gulab is more my *brother* than my own kin. People can claim I’m racist, and they are not wrong, but have them explain -if you can- why I would lay my life down for Gulab -a brown Muslim- before I would any white Christian or Atheists that I know. Have them explain that. See, because Gulab already proved he is an honorable man, a noble man, a real man; a real fucking man.

“I hate niggers, not because they’re black, but because they have no honor. And I hate all modern men for the same reason. You show me a nigger with honor and that man is my brother. Man, I like Kanye, *ok* , that dude gets it. He said, *fuck money man, feelings matter* . He -Kanye- said that and became my brother in that moment. I have an example of a brown, Muslim goatherder -Gulab- that I know has honor and I call that man my brother, my hero, my ideal. So, put that in your *dossier* of me, next to all that other shit when you’re calling me low and gravid and immoral.

“I dare you to hold your modern rationalist morality up to that man. You will look as you are compared to that man, a *spectre* , a ghost, a vapor. You are nothing compared to that man. And I hope I am one percent as honorable as that



man. And my decision to avenge those who dishonored me was a start," the inmate was not speaking directly to MO and Isaiah, *he was speaking of whomever would condemn him for his heterodox views on -well, on everything,* Isaiah thought.

"A start," he said again, quietly and looked away to the wall.

MO -working inside his own *cortex* and in tandem with the cloud- highlighted certain gene expression and pored over the genomic data from the man. Algorithms ran, time was stamped, MO cross-checked 739 variables of endocrine and CNS and immune system function.

The air composition had changed by .02% in oxygen to CO<sup>2</sup> distribution and the inmate's heart rate had risen by six beats per minute; now to 73. MO augmented the air, increasing O<sup>2</sup> and dispersed a small amount of vasopressin and oxytocin into the austere -concrete- lab that stretched out for all those lengths east to west and a third as many feet north and south.

The inmate thought of home, of the days coming out of winter, the days going in to it. He thought prison was both larger and smaller than common man. *God had made the earth itself a prison*, he thought. He thought if he just said that, then maybe he need not say so much of all the rest. He thought the vernal starlight was like the nights of December too -the nights he had stood in the cold and snow in just underwear and boots, looking out upon the southern ravine- and he recalled thinking that one could only see once the eyes had adjusted to when it was most black all around.

### **III. 2033 e.v.**

The lab buzzed from the wasps only. The birds were nesting and in a *fugue* state after Isaiah had -from his corner- dosed

them with a paralytic and upgraded their immune response. They needed to rest to allow the new *alleles* to set.

Tania and MO had been speaking for twenty-four minutes about the inmate and arguing over this and that and Isaiah had finally had enough. He sent MO a DM and MO paused their conversation and looked toward Isaiah. This prompted Tania to do the same.

She saw Isaiah walk out from the dark side -from the east-of the lab and as he marched he was backlit by the mobile LEDs. The lights trailed him and cast his shadow forward on the concrete ground as it lit up underneath each step and she caught just one section of the Burmese python that lived below the lab now. The rocks were light grey from the sides, almost white from above, and the black body of the asp undulated in wide side-winding moves that seemed to build the body from itself. The once opaque floor was revealed by this angle of light each of Isaiah's footfalls produced.

She never did see head nor tail; she lifted the eyes as Isaiah finally spoke.

"Enough," he said and reset his allostatic system from its interoceptive state he'd been in for the last eight minutes. He had all the data he needed and now wanted to present it to a human as simply as he could for her uptake. He vacillated for .6 seconds -a thousand years to him, it seemed- debating in 1,078 iterations on whether or not to dose her with some MDMA now, ahead of time, and thus open her to the empathy levels necessary to understand what he was about to impart.

"What?" she then asked and looked at MO who stared at her without affect. She turned back toward Isaiah as he was now just one meter from her. *He seemed to close gaps so quickly with his body, one could turn from him and in one second he could travel ten meters all at once*, she thought and her

heart rate increased by 14%. Her body dumped 5nm of epinephrine into the blood; the capillaries dilated quickly, she felt pressure in the head and behind the eyes. Her throat was dry.

He handed her a four by six photo of George Klauba's, *The Whale Watch* ; the sapphire blue constellations in the sky, the water darker below; Leviathan afloat and towed. She stared at it. Her mind burst in the three areas that he wanted activated.

"I said, *enough* ." Isaiah repeated. "I've heard enough. Now, I've up-" he paused mid-word and corrected, "I've already uploaded the report to the cloud. You can download it at will. But listen to my distillation now. First and now."

"Ok," she said with some concern about the edges of her skin and hair. The air seemed dry to her, her nose seemed able to pull as much atmosphere through it as it ever had. She lowered the photo to her side.

"I began with the *PLOS* study by *Fischer* and *Broekens* in 2018. I took their data and I augmented it. But let me break down their first glance at it. They studied human emotion along gender lines. They studied women and men along two vectors. First, they took *fMRI* data of the *ACC -anterior cingulate cortex* - the ACC regions of the *pfc* . They used the data with the SPSS v22 protocol and conducted an ANOVA with gender abstraction. All that data with the specific coefficients is included in the report.

"Significant variation between male and female participants was discovered in two domains. First, men felt -in terms of brain activity- emotional distress and affect at levels nearly 24% higher than females. And this is university students, ok? This is not our cohort. This is not the aggressive - endogenously aggressive- male, ok? Second, females reported -repeat, reported- feeling a more intense affect at

rates of 31% over the males,” Isaiah said as he squeezed his fists to dissipate heat.

Tania felt her fingertips tingle a bit; her face felt hot; she repressed an urge to scratch an itch at her neck and jaw for 1.4 seconds before succumbing and rubbing it with the back of her hand.

“Just in case that isn’t clear. The men felt more than the women, and the women *claimed* to have felt more than the men,” Isaiah added -simplifying the data and deforming it slightly- and he then breathed. He paused, inviting her to speak.

She remained quiet.

“Next,” Isaiah began, “the use of models by the experimenters to demonstrate emotions, that is to say, paid actors to express quote *happy* , or quote *sad* , emotions for the participants to gaze upon seemed to matter. Men were more sensitive to the expressions of female models than males. A woman’s face produced more negative and positive affect in the male participants than did either the male or female models in the female participants. Men, again, were more sensitive to a woman than a woman was to a man or a woman. Self-reporting was still skewed in the direction of females over-reporting what they felt and men under-reporting what they felt.

“Next,” he began as Tania finally interrupted him.

“What are the numbers on that?” she said sharply.

He wrote on the chalk board:

*$F(1, 2053) = 106.681, p < .001, np$  to the second, which equals .49 w/ female models*

He said it aloud as well, making it clear he was giving her the dumbed-down version; the version she -as mere human- could understand. She had to quickly download the report

for that section because even this demotic version Isaiah had spoken had confused her; *and his hand-writing was sloppy*, she thought.

She felt that she needed it to appear in clear writing in front of her interface so she could understand it.

"And there's another bifurcation, the rubrics of *target* and *non-target* emotions. Target emotions are obvious emotions, the *sad* in the sad face, the *happy* in the happy face. The crab in crab soup," Isaiah said as Tania banished the coefficient data from her brain after she saw Isaiah was right on the affect of female participants gazing upon female study-models. She dismissed it as more complex than Isaiah presented it, and the data fell apart -in her mind- as quickly as she had gathered it up.

She just listened now.

"Non-target emotions are subtle emotions outside the emotions told to the models to represent; things like *disgust* or *jealousy* or *contempt*. These are emotions attributed to the models who were supposed to be merely showing happy or sad. These are quote, *non* -target emotions," Isaiah said. He felt like he was explaining the letter A to a baby. But she was the smartest of the group of employees so he worked with her.

"Ok," Tania said.

"Men were five times more likely to experience intense non-target emotions than women. Men -to put it bluntly- saw emotions -real or fabricated- in people's faces at a much higher rate than women. Women took happy as happy, sad as sad. Women were and are simpler. Men were and are significantly more complex. Now before you get your panties in a wad, men were often wrong in their appraisal of these *non-target* emotions. They were making shit up in their heads about what a face meant. So, the intensity of the

emotion felt was no indication of its veridical nature. Men often saw faces in the clouds, so-to-speak,” Isaiah said; his affect was stern.

“I’m not upset Isaiah, I’m following you. I just -I merely-asked for the coefficient numbers before. I see they’re correct, methodologically correct,” Tania said and looked at MO.

“Yes, they are. Now, they used a *Bayseian* model to assess *p-value* in an attempt to test the null hypothesis. That is attached to the report on the cloud.

“I, however, will press on because I took their rudimentary study and improved upon it. They built the model-T analysis and I just built the 2035 *Ferrari Piedmonta 770* version. So, here it is: I used real faces in real time from non-models; I used live feeds of people expressing genuine emotions in real time and showed those faces to people who did not know they were test subjects either. And I recorded more than *fMRI* and *DTI* data. I used the same battery of tests we use here -here in the lab- tests in endocrine function and gene expression and pain centers of the brain and dorsal horn and so on.

“I measured A-alpha and A-delta and C-nerves and both volume and character of pain of specific body locations and the allostatic system at these nine points,” he said and brought up a human body onto the screen as it came together -in a rectangle 5-feet by 8-feet- to their north. Tania gazed upon its movements, she saw the starbursts of electricity like magnalium and charcoal and nitrate in the face and throat, the heart, and all along a scaled-up CNS that was spinning slowly on an axis to the right side of the full male form on the screen. The colors burned blue when firing and cooled to white as the neurons swallowed their fire. A blue outline appeared in her *visual cortex* and she saw it hover there as if the horizon of a dark sky.

Isaiah monitored her inner vision *via* the cloud and then he spoke.

“Now, not only did the 2018 study’s results obtain and were replicated with fidelity, but the error rate for non-target emotions dropped to 24% from over 50%. That high rate was from when the doctors who designed and observed the study itself determined the errors. In real life, men were only wrong one out of four times when imputing non-target -i.e., subtle- emotions in whomever they were observing,” Isaiah said and reached into his pocket to retrieve the black stone.

“Wow,” she said. She saw such starburst connections in the virtual body he had shown her on the screen as more natural, easier to comprehend. She had no idea she had been primed by the painting to see constellations, the making order from a *Poisson* distribution of stars. The outline of the body, the elevation from meridian, the flashes of stars randomly along blue lines, all mapped onto the painting of the whale and the hawk and the moon sinking into the sea.

The real whale lay on the surface of the painting like the inmate, the thing real to the Platonic form in the PraXis cloud.

“And that was when men were observing other males. Men inputted false emotions to female faces only 13% of the time,” Isaiah said as MO’s own face twisted just a bit about the mouth and eyes. He was genuinely -if briefly- surprised as he paired that data to Tania’s affect.

“And how did you discover this?” Tania asked while trying to hide her incredulity.

“Again, I had access to both observer and observed human’s functional magnetic resonate imaging and tensor imaging and their complete endocrine system. I had their engram production and recall in real time and thought patterns with

actual silent-word production and right hemisphere imagining. I knew their thoughts better than they did. I did not reply -excuse me- rely on self-reporting which is about as useful as eye-witness testimony is," Isaiah said with mild contempt.

"Which is why they don't allow it in court anymore," MO added -he felt- helpfully.

"Not since 2030," Isaiah said in agreement and stared at Tania as she became aware that he knew what she was thinking of course too.

"Ok, so what's the upshot?" she asked.

"The upshot is that men are more sensitive emotionally than women in all domains except child care and empathy for strangers. Women are more sensitive to babies and strangers, men are more sensitive to everyone else. And they are most sensitive to their own woman," Isaiah said and squeezed the rune in his right hand.

"What?" she asked.

"A man is eight-fold more sensitive to his woman's opinion of him, expressed verbally and non-verbally, which includes body language. And he is more delicate *vis-à-vis* nineteen non-target emotional domains manifested in forty-four different facial expression. Men are highly attuned to the female, their *paramour* , wife or wife-to-be, most especially," Isaiah said.

"My husband wasn't that attuned to me," she said as her brain was more and more primed to argue; defending herself against data that seemed more and more an attack.

"Yes, he was; but he didn't express it. Again, men are thirty-four percent less likely to express it. And because women have a higher verbal IQ, even when men speak on their feelings they are fifty-six percent less likely to express their feelings with any facility at all.



“Men can’t speak very well compared to women.

“Men *think* they feel less than they actually do, then they express it less often, and then they express it *less well* when they do decide to speak up. Overall, men are twenty-four percent as likely to say exactly -accurately- what they feel than a woman, all the while feeling nearly six-times as much as her in that same interaction. That’s one out of four. Men suck at the output part of emotions, not the input part,” Isaiah said as he loosened his right hand. The rune lay in the crease of his bent fingers as if in a basket or nest.

“That seems crazy, Isaiah,” Tania said ignoring the data and just thinking of the conclusions.

“Yeah, well, let me ask you, do you know the *stats* on domestic violence?” he asked.

“I know it’s bad,” she said, not knowing the *stats* .

“It’s bad. Yes. But do you know how often a man beats his woman compared to how often a woman assaults her man?” Isaiah asked as he transfer the stone to his left hand; wiping his chin with the right forearm after the exchange.

“Ten times as often,” she guessed.

“Forty percent of the time the man assaults the woman; sixty percent of the time the woman assaults the man,” he said quoting from the FBI, local law-enforcement and medical metadata from a hundred-ninety counties in the fifty US states.

“What?” She asked incredulously. She felt he just made things up some part of the time.

“Yeah, women physically attack men more. But, the attack frequency is not what is important, because when a woman physically attacks a man it’s almost never lethal; and it’s rarely significant in terms of tissue or organ damage. Women often strike -but do not damage- men. When a man

strikes a woman, however, he kills her. Or he breaks bones or collapses a lung or leaves a massive contusion. Frequency is unimportant, effect is important. When men hit they damage their victim at nineteen times the rate of when women strike their man," Isaiah said.

"I see," she said understanding more as she actually listened. She relaxed and saw flashes of the blue bursts of neurons, the white lines with edges like horizons at noon, the outline of the avatar of a man hover in her vision like halo, memory, a comet landed -broken apart- and gone.

"Women's bodies are more vulnerable to the increased upper body strength of men, and the malice of men's power actuation. Men strike to kill, they do not pull punches, so-to-speak. When a man is angry enough to hit, he hits to kill. Women often hit softly due to lack of strength and also lack of malice. They hit at a lower threshold, and so they do not put their all into it. I've measured this in seventeen thousand seven-hundred eleven domestic violence cases in real time over the last five years," he said.

"What, how?" she asked with pique. She was in charge of the monitoring of the public outside the domain of the corporate charter. She felt his over-reach would redound to her detriment. She thought Mr. Sou -Governor Sou- would be furious and blame her.

"Tania," Isaiah said as he turned his head & eyes toward MO who was now waving his hand at her indicating it was he that was Isaiah's *how*.

"MO!" she screamed with anger and outrage; fear, shock, and feelings of betrayal and four more micro-emotions - including a slight feeling of contempt, just a bit of it, directed at MO.

Isaiah -attuned to each micro-movement of her face, each electrical load in the brain, each articulate and inarticulate

emotion in engrams and *coup-de-foudres* that exploded over her *neo-cortical* layer -like the planet observed from space at night- as tens of thousands of lightning strikes streaked and bloomed and mushroomed upon the globe. He felt all this in .157 seconds, gleaned merely -like an owner attuned to its dog- from his measuring of her miles of guts and acres of brain and a face with lines and spots he could chart like a star map.

And with -and in the time of- that one verbal utterance he began and ended his measure of her.

“Hey,” Isaiah barked with a sound so deep and hot and ragged -and as if it had come up through a gravel road set ablaze with petro-tar and gamma-rays and dragon-tracks- that Tania froze and didn’t look at him with her eyes; only her soul turned toward and bent down. Even her head had refused to turn back away from MO and toward him; the shoulders remained perpendicular to his. She did not blink; her lips and mouth stayed in the open position from her attempted upbraiding of MO. But no sound, no word, no air escaped her.

Isaiah felt a pain in the heart, and right ribs, and his right hand felt numbness. He had to reset his cardiovascular system and override the allostatic flux his burst of anger had elicited. The anger felt historical, like it began a billion years ago and produced a body -a tail- that finally reached the mouth all ‘*round* the cosmic expanse.

He -in .005 seconds, as his inner body moved at speeds approaching light- stamped and underlined the data that showed that the male body was equally weak *vis-à-vis* attacks from a female in the one domain that they -females- had superior strength. It was the same arena in which they -females- had a 97% advantage over men in their willingness to use full malice: *verbal attacks* .

*A woman was the inverse of the male, all her power was in her verbal IQ, and her willingness to use it ,* Isaiah saw in the data at speeds too fast to measure now. He was feeling, thinking and expressing it to the cloud in a space between a human's synaptic firings at a thousand to one.

*She -the female- could -in the right hemisphere- as the shaman -with the Tungusic word- the witch, the seer, the part & whole of the female brain that knew where each man was most insecure- the female could formulate the exact thing to say to damage a man. And she would unload it with full strength, unalloyed, both barrels ,* he thought.

The data was clear.

He let each example of this roll into the report on the cloud in a scroll instead of a dump; a ladder both up and down. He toggled her interface to it and forced her to watch the data come in at speeds she had to choke down as the data spilled all about her mouth and brain and lungs and blood.

Over and over it showed that women were massively more likely to insult a man's character, worth, integrity, and masculinity -the cock & balls- than a man would insult and injure a woman in this domain. And even when a man did insult his woman he often did it as effectively as a woman physically assaulted a man: i.e., not very effectively at all. Women often laughed at a man's weak insults, the way a man laughed off her feckless punches to his corpus. Men were inept in general with verbal attacks on a woman, and even when they did it they were less willing to go all the way and crush a woman's core self.

Isaiah had -owned- all the things the inmate had not said, refused to say, felt too guilty to say to a woman in a fight. Isaiah had each word kept down in the hold, traveling within the man as he sailed back and forth about the watery part of the world.

Men held back in this domain.

Men often pulled their punches about a woman's most vulnerable places of soul. He read the cloud-stored engrams of when the inmate had not said the most devastating things to a woman he argued with; knowing -seemingly- that such things went too far. The abortions of Heather, her most guarded secret; the cuckolding by Kelly -which she had revealed in confidence- the lie she told to both her husband and her son; the ugliness of Melannie's face -which she had admitted she reviled- and the lack of cognitive power to create anything truly great of which she was clearly aware; the bad skin of Sarah, the abandonment of her child, a scar she called an appendectomy but was a cesarean the only evidence, the stupidity of Alexandra; the shallowness of Julee Rae.

Each thing scrolled from inmate to Isaiah.

Isaiah saw each thing the inmate thought but never once said. Isaiah began to search out each thing left unsaid about everyone now.

*Just like women were not merely no good at physical violence it's that they did not commit to full use of their power when they struck out*, he surmised as the data that undergirded this case rolled on and on in him and the cloud. Tania was forced to let the data wash over her mind as Isaiah remotely toggled on her PGC in .044<sup>th</sup> of a second so her uptake would be assured. He simultaneously released her endogenous chemistry to augment her *amygdala* function and oxytocin metabolism so she would begin to show some empathy for his case. He released DMT and MDMA into the air just below her nose and then boosted it with a blood thinner and CRISPR vector to drive the *chems* into her CNS faster and with less catabolic degradation.

The blood-brain barrier was overrun as if by barbarians at insufficient gates.

*In the verbal domain, Isaiah thought, women were as strong as men are about the chest, arms and back, and as willing to go all the way -and say the most horrid shit- as willing to go all the way as a man is once he engages his ballistic violence. Women went for the balls of their man and did it with accuracy, felicity, and pure fucking malice. Their right hemispheres -brilliant and trenchant- knew exactly where to strike.*

Women were abusing men verbally to such a degree that it qualified as a national epidemic in Isaiah's opinion; for the consequences on the male body of being undermined verbally by his woman were as devastating -metabolically- to his heart and brain as *his* punches to *her* face and ribs were and would be. He repeated this again for Tania as she stood under the corporate cloud and the data -and Isaiah's conclusions- rained down on her and soaked her head and brain.

*But a bruise on a woman's face shows, a broken bone pokes through the skin,* Isaiah thought as each word he crafted over and over populated the cloud and her interface, force-feeding her like the liver of a goose soon-made *foie-gras* for the plate.

*And a man's broken heart and damaged brain, riddled with lesions and toxic levels of chronic cortisol and epinephrine and the PTSD that attends in men floats along below the surface. All we see are the oft-swept planks ,* Isaiah quoted with bitterness as each phrase he constructed made a cumulous bend in the cloud. *He, the man, is as damaged physically on the inside as she is on the outside, and when this is all factored in, women kill men in domestic violence at twice the rate as men kill women,* Isaiah asserted from the data he highlighted for Tania light corpusants within the PraXis cloud.

*Men feel more, the brain scans show this; and men feel more from their women especially. But women pretend to feel more, their self-reporting is just one more lie by the weaker sex, he thought with his jaw set and still .03 seconds away from the words that had begun to form in his brain for her. And women are more powerful and ruthless in their one domain of expertise: the emasculating insult. They're powerlifters and martial artists and assassins in the war for the removal of a man's balls.*

*And they are killing men -extra judiciously, like vigilantes- and they are getting away with it, Isaiah thought.*

*They are getting away with it until that man shoots himself - as men do 2.6 times more often from romantic discord than women do- or until that man shoots his wife, Isaiah thought. Or until he goes insane as the pressure in his head and heart and balls becomes too much to take, when each insult replays over and over due to dopamine staying at one hundred times the rate -than it does in women- remains minutes longer in the pfc of the most aggressive -and most sensitive- males. Her attacks are self-perpetuating, he recalls them long after she is gone.*

*He feels the attacks day after day in his perfect -adamantine- memory. He never forgets.*

*The brain made perfect to remember the grudge, like the corvid, Isaiah added thinking of the long memories of the blackbirds, is used to drive him insane. He goes insane until and unless he does something about it; for pain demanded a response. He must kill her or himself, as the pressure builds and builds like two tectonic plates in his head.*

*Men with the MAO-a allele and its product, its engrams - memories of doom- that are played and replayed and each day he re-lives each time a woman undermined him and the CNS begins to see dark faces in tenebrous clouds produced by small lesions on the brain, the parietal lobe, rivulets from*

*stress, and anomie, and neuro-chemistry that makes him feel his whole world is coming apart when his Love says he ain't no man at all. And the damaged heart from cortisol plaque makes his chest and lungs contract in panic attacks and he finally fucking loses it and kills forty-six people in an act of long-delayed vengeance for every slight every woman has subjected him to for over thirty-five years as he tried to become a man.*

It had been .9 seconds since she'd yelled at MO and Isaiah barked back:

*"Hey!"*

He used such bulk of air & timber with volume & vex to gain her attention at once that it extinguished all other flames of thought or attention in the room. All that he had learned of man and his brain and his heart collapsed into one frame of heat and light and mass.

"Tania," he then said lowly, with bass and elongated syllables, as if he was bifurcating her in an unequal two. Hearing his voice in her spine first, then her brain, she slowly -mechanically, frightenedly and following her soul's elliptical turn- twisted toward him and away from MO as if Isaiah had just then stepped between his father and his mother like a child asserting himself might. "The earth is struck 8-million times a day by lightning; and it doesn't matter how many of them don't start a fire. It's only the one strike that does... that matters. And there are 7.9 billion people on this planet."

"And?" she asked.

"It doesn't matter what the peaceful ones won't do. It only matters what that one dangerous man will do. So, do not ever yell at MO, again. Ever."



### 3. A Recursion; a Revanchist Pain

For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrong doer

Romans 13:4 [King James Bible]

To be great is to be misunderstood

Self Reliance [Emerson, Ralph W]

Alone of species, all alone! We try to understand ourselves and the world. We become rebels or patriots or martyrs on the basis of ideas. We build *chateaus* and computers, write poems and tensor equations, play chess and quartets, sail ships to other planets... the yearning for certainty which grails the scientist, the aching beauty which harasses the artist, the sweet thorn of justice which fiercens the rebel from the eases of life, or the thrill of exultation with which we hear of true acts of that now difficult virtue of courage, endurance; and of hopeless suffering

The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral mind [Jaynes, Julian]

#### **I. 2018 e.v.**

The forest floor was everything but red and so the blood drops appeared here and there in relief.

The gap in the canopy and the *komorebi* -this fracture of trees, escape and landed shade and sunlight- was before him and it helped him track the spatter of blood. He knelt for the first sign of the black bear passing; it had been 48-seconds since the shot rang out and he had seen the wounded animal run off down the one-to-one slope. He touched the bear-blood and rose at once and turned to the west by north-west.

The descending forest made him move quickly and with inertia and recklessness. Rocks gave more contrast, leaves and needles collaborated to hide the blood. He looked down

as he followed the broken branches and paw-shoved rocks and upturned soil and floor.

Half the forest was on his side, and half was on the side of the bear.

A rhythm of arterial spurting took hold -a music and math to the signage in dark red- and the eyes scanned the right distance as the slung bullpup 12-guage began to reveal its weight on his upper back and in his low-draped arms.

The biceps and forearms burned with lactic acid. His *traps* and *lats* -his wings- ached with dull earthly pain. He saw the creek below and saw rocks displaced as the bear ran away after being shot once with the black-hulled triumvirate of two pellets orbiting a rifled one-ounce slug. It had been like a two-mooned planet slamming into the *ursa major* constellation itself. *The great bear not killed but run off into the northern sky*, he thought as he looked for more signage and stopped to listen for the animal itself.

The soil underneath the displaced stones was dark and lit up with white spider eggs and pink worms and sometimes the larva of flies.

His boots were broken at the sole and when he stepped on fallen logs or olive and white rocks his foot felt as if on the Hardy tool itself; folded over to make two dissimilar metals conjoin. His weight pushed down on the arch. Pain shot up like a launch from *Ba'albek*. Sweat collected around his neck in pools and streams like the quarry out in Greenfield was both fed and drained at the edge.

He had nine more two & three-quarter-inch shells in the shotgun; and his .45 under his left armpit had the full complement of seven plus one rounds. He rushed -not stopping to catch his breath- to pick up the blood trail of the bear, for he had merely wounded it and the longer it took -

and the more sparse the trail- the more he thought it would be a merely lingering wound.

He felt scared for his soul if it -the bear- suffered any more than necessary before it died.

## **II. 2039 e.v.**

Photographs from a polaroid still lined his jacket. They were square and rigid and had not burned. One had taken shrapnel but only a small tear in the edge.

*Karim Franceschi* was now 53-years old and he had lost only the one hand and three pints of blood over all his years fighting in *Raqqa* , and eastern Syria and now in the hills of the state of Carolina. He'd been here a year and six days. *And tomorrow was new year's day of 2040 of the vulgar era* , he thought.

He bent slowly -aware of his kit and the metal D-rings- and kept the BMG pointed toward the aperture of the concrete window of the bunker they had built. The road was muddy from warm rains in December, and the police had left divot & ruts with their personnel carriers last week when they broke through the road's gate and bulldozed the compound itself.

They -*Karim's* team- had been underground anyway, and all they had lost was an iron stove and rain catchment system and a few thousand rounds of ball ammo. *Franceschi* was unfazed. His spotter had been arrested the week before that and he now spent most days watching the road and eating as much as he could. His girl -his third scout- had left to go north. He didn't expect she'd return. She had said she loved him while her eyes looked down at his hands. His hands were really his *hand* , and the prosthetic that he could make a key-grip with thanks to a BCI chip they had put between

his *somatosensory cortex* and *motor cortex* for the lower arm.

He had a short scar on his head that was pink and raised like a bad weld.

He rubbed his nose as he rose from retrieving the flask from his kit, and he decided to roll a cigarette as he waited for the next convoy to return. *This time it would not be police*, he thought. "I need my grinder," he then *-apropos* of nothing- said aloud.

He thought of his platoon -the Antifa International *Tabur* - in *Raqqa* , and he saw each of a dozen men -eleven and himself- in a convex curve during their first morning briefing once they had been given their own unit separate from the YPG of the Kurds. He was the only one who spoke *Kurmanji* as the *Rojava* Revolution pressed on like pollen blown by wind.

*The Quandil mountains were a long way away, in time and space*, he thought.

Everything then had been light grey -light grey and rusty- and nothing had been right. Things meant to be cold were hot, things that should have been warm were thus frozen, and anything hard was better soft, everything wet ought to have been put aloft and kept dry. But they had learned how to fight, and had won more battles than they lost, and retained more of their blood and men than they gave up.

His *Mao* pin had lost its backing but had fallen into his lap as he slept in the nest of a minaret outside *Abdulmalik* just a few kilometers from the *Euphrates* . He had recovered it when he awoke.

His hand had come off when he reached out of the nest to keep the jamb of his window -with no glass- from falling into the courtyard below. The rebar had rusted and the vibration of *Isis* tanks had made it crumble and fall. He reached for it

reflexively and held it there just a few seconds as ground fire perforated the end of his arm in three places. All he felt was the grains of concrete dust hit his eyes and pressure, like being nailed to the wall.

Before he'd heal enough to have scabs on it his unit would disperse to Thailand and Europe and the States. Kevin Benton -a Scottish *Antifa* member- had ran the sniper rifles - there were two- in *Raqqa* the entire two weeks. Hopped up on meth and *maté*, he slept only on the buttstock to the rifle until they shipped out to *Tabqa Dam* up river from *Raqqa* itself.

They had drank ditch water, but they had GPS units and Hilux trucks alongside belt-fed weapons and eleven out of their first twelve men. They shit and puked as quietly as they could, and they took the hydroelectric plant in twenty-two minutes; holding it with two men on each flank.

Joshua Baily, the only Yank, was a reject from the US Army - due to a bad eye- and he had shipped from Baltimore - where he had been making nine bucks an hour and living with his mother- to the top of a dam that controlled all power for the city at the heart of *Isis'* caliphate in 2016. He had felt insecure for weeks, but his first kill cured him of that. A swagger developed not from murder, but revolution and defense of his newly hardening ideals. *Abdullah Öcalan* was the leader of the Kurdish forces, and from jail he sent messages to the YPG.

The foreign forces never had contact until one day Bailey had been sent an email on his laptop.

Öcalan was an amalgam of Marxist and ecologist, and calling the nation state, "the cage of natural society," had struck *Karim* as inexact; and this both heartened and rankled him. *Karim* was Moroccan and Italian, but he had his eye on the American south. He saw that as the next AO for this global war against the corporate hegemony that used

rednecks and nationalists to send first to the wound. *Karim* wanted to create more wounds than could be filled, and in fact that is how he'd put it one night to Bailey as the email came in from the imprisoned leader of the *Kurdish* forces to which this unit was attached.

"I'm a minarchist," Bailey had said, explaining libertarianism and anarchism with an American accent and *patois* .

They had used *Sterno* cans -blue flames low to the silver rim- in order to heat coffee and boil rags; they had eaten their food cold. In group photos they slung their weapons if yeoman, held them in pose if fresh recruits. The old timers like *Karim* let the *Kalashnikovs* or heavy weapons lean against the jamb of the Toyota's doors.

In evenings he read *Chavez* again because it was all he had; he'd lost all his books during the last disembark; he bent the spine unnecessarily, and read:

*Some of my mother's side of the family said that I had a great grandfather who was a murderer. He was my mother's grandfather, Rafael Infante's father. But these are ptejr grandmother's stories. As you can see, it was all grandmothers and a lot of aunts; I never knew my grandfathers.*

*My mother's family was large and almost all of them were women.*

*They were very pretty -we call them catiras, you call them blonds. My mother is a catria, her hair is the same color as yours, blond. Once we head about the time our grandmother Martha scolded our mother. It was in Rostrojo one weekend, we had gone to see our grandmother and to eat papaya and play. My mother says that when she was young, less than thirty years old, my grandmother always scolded her for bad behavior. She was very strong willed, She said to her, "*

*Elena, you are like that because you are an offshoot of that murderer; yes, that murderer, your grandfather, Rafael's father; he was a murderer. He killed a man called Bolívar; he tied him to a tree and shot him, and he cut off another man's head right in front of his children."*

*That's how I found out about my grandfather 'the murderer.'*

*This story always disturbed me over the years I searched for information about him. I discovered that he is in fact a legend; his legacy still haunts the paths he travelled. I learned that he was not a murderer but a guerilla fighter. When my grandfather Rafael and his brother Pedro were little -just like you, Aleida, when your father left- their father rebelled against the government. That was how I found out the truth and it freed me.*

*I discovered the truth, or rather part of the truth, in a book . [Chavez; an interview with Aleida Guevara]*

*Alberto Ballesteros* was Spaniard and a feminist with glasses and a mustache from days long passed.

Lasik and full beards had overtaken most of those his age, but he maintained a kind of commitment to old times. He wore a patch of the Spanish Republic on his deltoid, he read more Trotsky than Lenin or Marx. His friends in Spain called him an autocrat, he told them to go be civilians in the cities then. They had challenged him to go fight in the desert; so he flew to *Sulaymaniyah* and was in the mountains within three days.

Ana Campbell was thirty in 2016 and had come from one of the three *ridings* -kinda like counties- of England's Yorkshire. Others used three syllables when they read it aloud; she corrected them with just two. She had run drugs for six years, heroin and methamphetamines for a boyfriend at

first, then herself when he was pinched in a raid she missed by three minutes and two blocks down from Duke Street in *Sheffield* . The Park Hill Flats were conceived in the brutalism era and yet they lacked the best traits of that *ethos* ; their angular concrete had been made soft with yellows and reds, like a large mammal dressed in clown clothes.

She had told stories to the men around the viscous-chemical fires and her face was lit up more because she sat closer to the flame. She was slight and cold and so their faces - bearded and black in the desert night- receded and hers took center like a blood moon flanking dim constellations of the north:

“That was when the police would hold corners and we dipped into doorways and up stairs or in the service lift. But like I said I was raised by men who could see before I could see what I was. They saw my ways. My,” she paused and moved the straps of her LBE over her bones. “Well, they tried to annihilate me mentally and physically. I thought to myself, either they’re *gonna* kill me or I have to grow and become strong.

“And I thought I ain’t going out like that. So I grew; but the scars remained in my heart and on my body.

“My voice too has scars, my throat,” she said and lifted back the head and clasped the neck with her left hand; the scars on her trachea were thin but white like cracks in dark clouds, and her voice was rough in laughter and when she got loud.

“Anyway, I was reminded by the scars what map I didn’t want to follow.

“At eighteen I ran far away where no one could find me. But I was poor. Poorer than my family even. And I refused to show my body for a quid or a shilling or two. I



met my first strong man then. He made me an offer I couldn't refuse, eh? At nineteen I trafficked narcotics from *Sheffield* into *Edinburgh* . Then by twenty I was moving it into the Netherlands and Norway. He let me keep the cash, over a hundred thousand pounds a year. He did not rip me off at all. He had honor and I had more quid than a girl of twenty should have.

"I put it in a Glenfiddich box, wrapped tight with the queen facing herself over and over in paper; like slices of her life I used to think. I'd use my thumbs to fan the paper money and watch her face move like a film of her staying in one royal place. I put that box in my freezer and when the bobbies came I showed them; I had an honesty to me then. I opened the freezer door; I didn't make them look. I felt guilty but they ignored the box and searched everything else. I was amazed. I knew then that God loved me and that I was lucky and that was all one thing. But I also knew that meant the Lord wanted me to stop what the fuck I was doing and so I did.

"I used the rest of my money to find a place far away from there. I got a boyfriend at twenty-three, but he was weak, not like my drug dealer man. He was nice. You guys call them betas I guess. But I saw that I'd ended right back in my childhood, surrounded by nice guys scared of a woman like me. A woman strong and willful and ambitious must be tamed by a large and powerful man, we need it. We will only allow such men to press on us, like weight, like weight cannot be faked. Plastic weights don't make the muscles grow, and weak men don't corral an alpha woman at all.

"Men need nature -a big heavy wave or bear- to discipline them. A woman needs a man. But bear cubs won't do for either of us.

“People can say alpha women don’t exist, but that is because they don’t understand biology at all. Alpha women exist. I’m five foot nine and a hundred and fifty pounds, and I fight -I don’t run- and I rub people the wrong way. I’m extroverted, I command a room, I ain’t quiet and don’t demur.

“Alpha women want you, we don’t need you.

“Anyway, back then, I stayed silent for six months until I could get my shit together and move out. He never knew my past. I lied. By omission.

“But I was sick of living a lie, and like alpha men, I wanted to declare who I was to the world. Most women are happy to lie, to avoid conflict. They see it as smart. And it is. But I hated lies. I stopped wearing makeup, I stopped pretending to laugh. I changed my whole way with the world.

“G was the only one who I told. I told him at twenty-four and he toasted me with a drink. Imagine that. He was a real man. And I loved him,” she said at last and spit coffee and chicory into the rocks around the chemical flame.

*Karim* had loved her he thought now as he thought of her holding court. But they never even shook hands. She had told him other stories, stories much worse when they were alone in the nest. But he didn’t recall them now.

The hand he’d used to hold the block was so damaged he cut it off himself before he was transpo-ed to *Aleppo* four hours later. They cleaned it and gave him a shot of antibiotics and he remembered the look the doctors gave him like they had given him a weeks’ pay. He had refused aspirin. Morphine wasn’t offered, even as they were in the middle of the opium capital of the world as *Isis* had begun to use the port of *Iskenderun* to ship heroin to Greece and Italy

and then the world. *It was like refusing a veggie burger on a Texas cattle ranch* , he thought, because his hosts exported 100% of their own product to the west.

The memory faded. The brain linked twenty years ago to two weeks ago with the blink of an inner eye.

He'd seen the biker gangs in town, just over 16-miles from their compound- and he'd moved through the isles of the corner store pretending to look for anti-emetics and antihistamines. The bikers had jangled with their wallet chains and their side arms brushing against the buttons of their denim cuts. Leather swished and boots clomped and deep voices spoke in words truncated to syllables of no more than pairs.

The rain had made their armpits and chaps squeak with damp joints. The heat and humidity made them cranky.

He thought of the weather along Virginia and wondered if their elevation would be enough. He asked about storm surges in his mind, he read reports from cargo ships out at sea. He often dreamed of seabed, trenches, and the vector of sharks between gulfs and open water.

He'd seen the patches of the death-head, the *toten-wolf* , and he'd sent his coder's images to the main house's hub. He'd looked up at the men -the neck swinging the head like scimitar- on the way to planting his eyes on something else so they would not be his end point, and thus they would not feel the weight of his gaze. The bikes made concussive blasts in the parking lot, churned dust in the lot, and made each man speak louder -which came in waves- as the door to the store opened and closed in intervals.

*The reactionaries were swarming the hills of his side of this county* , he thought, and his people were resting from noon to 1600 as was standard for the last three days. He was on watch. And his wrist began to reach out into the prosthetic;

and pain in the phantom hand thus made a fist. He ignored the pain, and focused instead on the men who caused it, and the ideology that animated such men.

“Yeah, and the Pharaohs had the pyramids, does this make their society good?” *Karim* remembered asking the young man who had seen only 6-weeks in gun-battles with Muslims in France. The young man was twenty-four and had said that Europe -unlike America- at least built cathedrals and grand libraries and art. *Karim* had held that example of the Pharaohs in his pocket like a worn card.

“I guess not,” the young man -Franklin- had said as he poked at the coals under their coffee pot outside *Marseilles* .

*Karim* was always putting out fires in young men like this, tamping down their admiration for grand things built by slaves and mangled bodies and souls. He found it harder and harder each year -with each influx of recruits- to dissuade them from their love of things tainted by greed and stupidity and malice.

“Margins,” he said aloud, “surgeons call it margins when they cut away tissue of a tumor.”

His war was with the ideology of fascism, his war was with ideas, but he saw ideas corrupted the flesh, not merely the mind; he wondered why. He had seen that the DNA blueprinted organs, organs that assembled in secret plot. He witnessed the agreements made to build a body of a man, a fascist, he saw first cause in the mere ideas. He didn't mind hatred, unlike liberals, he had no desire to keep the peace. He wanted war so he -and his side- could win.

But his hand -or where his hand once was- hurt, and he thought that that -like the new year- was mere idea too.

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"Of course it's a real phenomenon but that isn't the point; the point is you feel like you aren't able to communicate that with anyone else," MO said.

"No, I communicate it just fine; I just communicated it to you and you understood it," the inmate said defiantly.

"Correct, but my point is that nobody else gets it and you don't understand why," MO said.

"I understand why; they're retarded and evil," the inmate said. He glanced back at the slab and saw the glass of water sitting there; bubbles percolating up like the tentacles of a clear jellyfish. He saw the nematocysts of the *turritopsis rubra* in his mind flash -mapping onto the thin bubbles of CO<sup>2</sup> - with the bell of the fish formed in the distortion of the glass.

MO laughed and tapped his head with his index finger. The inmate amused him.

"But, wait; you know what? Explain it again. To me, explain it again," MO added. He had an idea.

"My balls hurt," the inmate complained.

"Do it for me; do it for America," MO said. He had watched 1.9 million examples of irony under the rubrics of religion, patriotism, and gender roles. He was practicing. He was once again trying to explain the nuances of how the human brain worked to the inmate.

And MO had a new idea.

The inmate laughed and stood up and stretched. MO had let him out of the chains again and measured his response each time to make sure he was surprised each time. It was the only way to make sure the memory block was working for sure. The inmate could feign surprise in everyway except the metabolic shock at being allowed out of his chains for

the quote *first time* unquote each time MO released him from the cuffs.

“Ok, one more time, second verse same as the first,” the inmate began; he knew he’d said this many times, but he had no idea just how many. “We live in a society in which it is taboo to strike a female under any circumstances. It’s even illegal now to defend yourself or physically remove a woman from your home regardless of her behavior. I’ve had to call 911 just to get the cops to remove a girl after she literally kicked down my door. Literally. And I use that word correctly unlike everyone else.

“Why the fuck do they use, *literally*, to mean, *figuratively* , and nobody says a word? I know this is a digression, but TV hosts, people paid to talk use the word *literally* incorrectly incessantly and nobody says a word. Mika Brzezinski is the worst offender I’ve heard; she will say, *it literally drives me up a wall* , and nobody says, *uh, that’s not true Mika, it figuratively drives you up a wall you low IQ bobblehead*, ” the inmate said and shrugged. MO laughed a little to be polite. The inmate had brought that woman up -and her IQ- three dozen times. The joke was wearing thin, but it was almost funny because it was no longer funny. MO noticed that the joke had changed from over-use even as the inmate only thought he’d said it maybe -merely- four or five times.

MO made note of that on the cloud.

“Anyway, the taboo is monolithic and not subject to appeal. Period. Ok, however, well, first let me explain why: men are on average larger and stronger and so it’s unfair to use physical methods to enforce a position against someone who cannot defend themselves; actual corporeal damage is done disproportionately due to the size and strength differences between men and women and especially since I’m so large and strong and all my women are by definition tiny because I don’t date big girls.

“Now, men, specifically alpha males have a very fragile inner landscape; our endocrine system and *limbic* region and overall brain morphology has evolved to be very sensitive to slights and usurpations and any insults of our masculinity. Even chimpanzee data proves this with everything from *dorso-lateral pfc* activity and metabolization to cortisol samples, or levels, in their scat,” the inmate said as MO let the new data from the immune system load.

They had run more experiments on the T-cells of the spinal cord and seen that immune cells -specifically cytokines- are recruited by the CNS to increase pain when pain is not suppressed. Pain itself caused more pain; and this was accomplished by pain signals recruiting immune cells to irritate nerves in the dorsal horn, the spine, the hub of the pain wheel.

*The helm of awe* , MO thought.

Under normal immune response, the cytokine -in addition to rushing to a wound to eat the foreign pathogens that entered through broken skin- also irritated nerve endings to cause wound pain.

The cells did this to effect a sensitive area to demand a response to the wound; i.e., being careful with the fissure, which would facilitate healing. But chronic pain -if untreated- signaled these waiting soldiers of the immune system to merely create more pain in the dorsal horn by infiltrating that area of the body and inducing neural firing.

MO updated the cloud with this information in .025 seconds between breaths that the inmate took.

“Therefore,” the inmate explained as this new cloud data mixed with his own coder, “when a woman makes a snide comment or a cavalier remark or overtly insults one’s manhood the man feels emotional pain, which is physical

pain, and he feels it a higher level that she would. The felt pain is higher in men, and especially men with honor backgrounds. Genetic and cultural. Now, some men -and most women- find insults humorous, I remember Heather literally laughing when I insulted her, and incidentally the data from Nesbitt and Cohen shows that this maps onto southern versus northern men. Right? Northern men tend to find insults humorous compared to southern men who took it quite seriously anytime they were insulted.

“And taking something seriously is just the second order consequence of *feeling* something seriously,” the inmate said and thought of how he never laughed when anyone insulted him. *No fucking way*, he thought.

“Ok, so,” he continued on, “the internal damage done to the man, the alpha specifically, is demonstrably disproportionate and can have long term deleterious effects on the body.

“Elevated epinephrine and other parasympathetic responses, neural burnout and adrenaline related memory formation -shit, the T-cell activation, the immune system itself irritates the nerves, and this happens from chronic emotional pain no differently than an enduring physical pain does- anyway, the epinephrine catalyzes memories that results in PTSD; which is due to *hippocampus* damage, brain damage. These are all medical facts -you know neuro-anatomical facts- and yet, it is not taboo for a woman to insult her man. Even as this shit causes short-term then long term-pain and damage to the central nervous system, heart, immune system, and so forth.

“She can get away with commenting on some other guy’s attractiveness or undermining his masculinity in some oblique way; she can say any manner of offensive and humiliating things and get away with it even though it does



real corporeal damage to the man. It's domestic abuse, like literally. And I use that," the inmate said as MO interrupted.

"Correctly, I know," MO said. *The inmate was obsessed with this delineation between literal and metaphorical*, MO thought.

"Ok, well, science meta data and medical and neuro-imaging studies have all shown that men are extremely susceptible to genuine pain-response that uses the exact same pathways as physical pain in the brain, the same biochemical and synaptic corollaries and the same stress responses even chronic stress responses that have long-term negative effects on the body including cortisol dumps that correlate with heart disease and -like I said- PTSD that mimics the *-beat-dog* or *abused-wife*- symptoms of outsized and chronic fear response. You know, *Stockholm syndrome*, reduced self-esteem, depression, anxiety, paranoia, and ultimately self-harm. That includes suicide which men are three to four times more likely to commit suicide than women.

"And -further- even some mutagenic responses have been shown in the lab when male mice are subjected to antagonisms by females only; responses that don't appear when technicians, you know clinicians, use male antagonists instead.

"There is a tangible and peer-reviewed phenomenon of the male mammal having a different and significantly more negative body-response to female emotional abuse," the inmate said for the *upteenth* time in a perfunctory manner. MO watched it all load onto the cloud inside cell analogs that would join his engrams of each story the inmate had told of each woman that had insulted, mocked, and betrayed him over his life. The cloud would join the technical data, the epidemiological information in the inmate's own voice and marry it to the stories he had told of

his own life to create one single narrative that explained the danger of untreated pain, emotional pain, and women as a source of pain in a pill that anyone with his genome could swallow all at once and understand it in useable form from day one.

It would be like the desire of DNA to recapitulate -with perfect fidelity- the story from gene to gene to gene over each generation.

The story was the desire, the DNA was replicator, the telling of the story, which would manifest as each instantiation of the genome -i.e., each man- and the information would build the material world. The material world meant the world and the man -the men- themselves. In MO's model, each part of this had an analog to the natural world. And the story would replicate in the genes, then the cells and organs -like the brain- then the men themselves, and it would recapitulate perfectly, as perfectly as DNA: 99.999% of the time.

*The source of familial pain would have to wait*, MO then thought.

He had to focus on one thing at a time. He felt there would be a work around for that in the environment itself -by controlling for the father and mother in the rearing- and thus he could focus -at this stage- purely on self-defense for the post pubescent life-cycle of the genome. It was still very early, and he had ideas, and a plan on paper. He had the basic information -the story and the data- *but it would be a while before I can build this in the world*, he thought.

He could control who the parents would be, but not whom the genome would mate with over a lifetime that MO felt could easily be infinite. This was why the genome of the inmate had to be perfectly crafted to hit the ground running and carry with it all the knowledge the inmate -thanks to MO- now had.

MO saw the polypoid phase and the medusa stage of the modified genome cycle like an analog clock running in time. The model in his mind mimicked the rejuvenated *dohrnii* which reached sexual maturity in thirty days -provided that the water temperature was 20-degrees Celsius- or in eighteen to twenty-two days if the temperature was higher by 2-degrees.

He let the ocean water temperatures -from yesterday's download- from the Sea of Japan, the Mediterranean, and the *Foveaux Strait* of the south island of New Zealand load too onto the cloud.

*The hydrozoan jellies, MO thought as he modeled it with the new data, would reach maturity -reproduce- then revert to planula larva, then polyp and budded to ephyra and then adult with full bell all over again . This could go on forever , if I solve for movement and then solve for pain , MO thought. And in order to solve for pain, this must go on -move- forever.*

"And yet?" MO asked the inmate, prompting the man to explain what would seem endogenous thoughts but that came from the sparks MO had built in the nodes in the cloud; data striking the convicted man's coder like trees lit up by bolts of lightning. MO didn't know how many times he'd have to have the inmate run this maze of sorts. He would just keep repeating it and repeating it until he had a functional vector for his goal: solve for pain -in this most sensitive of creatures- without merely narcotizing the patient and eliminating the evolutionary benefits of pain, and without eliminating the knowledge of what pain can do. *Nobody, MO thought, suffered more than mankind -due to his capacity for knowledge of his own suffering- and nobody suffered more than the man built to notice all the fine-grained things of the inner and outer terrain of the world.*

*Immortality may be the only way to get enough iterations, otherwise just as they learn it -in 60-80 years- they die,* MO thought in .020 seconds as he ended his question and the inmate began to answer.

“And yet, nobody gives one fuck,” the inmate said. “If I was to punch that bitch out for saying that shit I’d be the bad guy even though she’s giving me heart disease the whole goddamn time with impunity.”

“And you explain the studies and the way it works biologically?” MO asked as he made sure the endocrine data was still linking to the cloud. He also made sure the algorithms were crafting a narrative this time. The *bots* used the inmate’s words, how he said it slightly differently each time to build a story.

“Yes, I go into great detail and site my sources, and nobody -dude- their eyes glaze over and they drool,” the inmate said and shook his head and sat back down in the chair.

“You’re using science and facts and logic to prove a point that they intuitively cannot accept. You might as well tell them that science shows that chocolate tastes the same as rats. They won’t buy it,” MO said to provoke slight confusion in the inmate so he could mine the chemicals and CNS states he needed.

“Why?” the inmate asked.

“Because they see you as a monster. Have you looked at yourself lately?” MO widened his eyes to map his body onto his words. He was building *rappport* and building new pathways in the inmate’s brain and on the cloud. MO was priming him to see himself as incapable of ever convincing anyone of anything. MO knew this would just drive the man to never give up, never be slaked, like a mud wasp rebuilding his damaged nest until it died.

“But my insides are soft and gooey and in fact I’m more sensitive on the inside which is why I need all this armature; I’m like the lobster tail or the crab leg; that hard, boney, sharp exterior is guarding the sweetest -most tender- meat in the pelagic universe,” the inmate admitted.

“Lobster tail, oh, man; let’s have that for lunch!” MO said as he practiced 17% use of jocular language to ingratiate himself with humans. It was 50% less than most, and 85% less than salesmen, but it was more than he had been using.

MO scanned the inmate again and compared it to the data from the first telling of the story and began checking for any anomalous data points. The PTSD was obvious, even in the second telling, after MO had manipulated down his epinephrine levels and slowed synaptic voltage charging to attenuate electrical cavitation; a control methodology he had invented to isolate emotional responses that were hardwired into the wetware. These were not the affectations often used by humans to manipulate therapist and clinicians.

These were direct chemical manipulations of the brain, and exact designs of the algorithms in the cloud. MO controlled each tiny *nanobot* like God knew each hair on each child, and each drop in each of the seven seas.

MO began to feel an overwhelming desire to fix this man; to get inside and knockout gene expression in manifold locations of the PFC and *dorso-lateral* PFC, the *limbic* region and the *hippocampus* ; *my God that man’s hippocampi* , MO thought as he worked on his demotic language skills internally now. He relaxed more and more into his role. *They say* , MO thought, *to think in foreign tongue to take a foreign lover if one wants to truly learn a new language.*

*But he -the inmate- was too anomalous to fix yet; the pain must continue for quite some time .* MO took comfort in

knowing that the inmate didn't want the fix anyway; *they were conspirators together in this crime*, MO thought.

*And the inmate was no victim, well, no innocent victim*, MO thought. He had been the abuser more than once and had behaved terribly and exhibited all the ignoble traits he condemned others for. *In spades*, MO thought.

MO had to remind himself of that to short-circuit this inordinate sympathy he had for the man. The *bots* had been building a story and uploading it to MO; and MO had begun to notice that story -of the inmate as a sympathetic character- had even begun to work -slightly- on himself. That sympathy was not helpful to anyone, MO especially; *I have a job to do and an unrealistic evaluation of this man's status was inhibiting the performance of my duties*, he reminded himself. He then thought of the inmate saying, *fitness over truth*, in the way he had of facing downward but uplifting his eyes like he was sorry to reveal such truths; as if he was making distinction without a difference; pretending he thought something he did not.

*What was the truth?* MO asked himself. If MO measured him by the absolute, then Lyndon was a failure, a liar, an incompetent and malicious error in the living museum of life. But compared to other humans, he was exceptional in nearly every way. He was born a *homo sapien-sapien* in one of the worst cultures in the worst epochs in human history if MO was to measure it all along the vector the inmate had idealized and reified; the environment MO was beta testing as one of his models.

*And it was true*, MO thought, *that the inmate was born out-of-time and out-of-place; a caveman in the Anthropocene; a Laconic warrior in land of the chattering-class; a man of letters among the zeros and ones of the digital age.*

He was wrong a lot; he was wrong -in novel situations- 66.9 % of the time; he lied 32.3% of the time; he was hypocritical

in a glaring way 42.75% of the time; this was a horrible and risible number; unless one compared it to the average human, who was wrong -in novel situations- 89.8% of the time; lied 67.6% of the time and was a hypocrite a full 80% of the time. Even the best scores by the best people were worse than his were; the top 1% of each rubric were 10-35% worse than him.

*He was like some dilapidated, weathered, defaced, ruined monument; the Elgin or Parthenon Marbles, MO thought as the images of the mathematically interesting architecture appeared in his interface.*

*The Pyramids at Giza or lithics of the north; elegant and complicated and ornate brocades of form and function that out-classed anything even remaining of its era, but pock-marked and amputated and mostly eroded away . He had the measurements of each building in Greece, each monument of Egypt, each block at Ba'albek , each monolith on the Isle, and the uneven division of each ant, man, and their genomes stored on the cloud.*

*But I need so much more data, he thought as he saw the FLIR imaging from Göbekli Tepe ; the buried monoliths - predating Stonehenge by six millennia- below grade.*

*Inmate 16180339 was the one of the best of a ruined species; and it made it even worse to see it somehow , MO thought. The other humans MO could treat like bacterial cultures; they were so low that they had avoided the erosion of wind that the inmate suffered because he stood up; so erect in the face of these sandstorms. His peers engendered no pathos nor revulsion nor lament because they didn't even have any shame; the way you don't feel embarrassed for animals who go around naked even though you see the same anatomy that makes you blush when it's a human so exposed.*

He suffered MO's opprobrium unjustly, MO thought - objectively- for a moment. But, it was only because he could have been so much better than everyone else that MO held him to a higher standard that -as an actual human- he could never reach. *The stamp, MO thought, of his lowly origin as evident now as when Darwin wrote those words of them all. The inmate had given up when he had fuel left in the tank. Ah, but this was the irony of why I like him after all,* MO thought.

MO felt dyspeptic around humans; and as filthy and slobbering and weak as Lyndon was, he was the enemy of mankind; *hostis humanius generus* ; *and the enemy of my enemy is my friend* , MO smiled at this.

"Lyndon," MO said, "what if I could take the pain away?"

"I'd want to remember why I was previously in so much pain," the inmate said immediately. "You can't take away the memories, or at least not the information. I don't want to ever be *naïve* again."

This was the first thing he thought of, and he said it without any incredulity that it could be done. He was not dubious of the relief, but only the danger of doing it all over again if he lost his memory. He'd take the pain innate to the memory itself over the risk of ever being foolish again. He didn't quite understand yet how the *hippocampus* worked, how memory worked, how it was a function of the *hippocampus* to re-learn, re-write over top; how to re-learn made man let go of the grudge, relax the vigilance, give people another chance.

One did not forget to hate; one re-learned how to love. And a shrunken *hippocampus* prevented re-learning; it made sure one never forgot the first lesson, the lesson most painful, the lesson burnt into the brain.



"Of course," MO said. MO had -and the cloud had- been thinking the same thing, of course.

"I mean it MO; no more women or friends or family. I can never trust people again. Only myself; you can allow me to trust myself only. Even if I don't feel the pain, I want to still know it deep in my meat like I know it now that people are no good; are rotten at heart and that they'll destroy me if I ever love any of them again. And I don't want to be cynical and phony like them; untrusting but glad-handing and gregarious like them either; don't make me a fool nor a grifter. I don't want to be a used car salesman who hates everyone but pretend to like them. I just want to be left alone with myself. I'm actually happy alone. I mean, I like you, you're different, but then again you ain't human."

MO smiled.

"That's a compliment," the inmate assured him.

"Believe me, I know," MO said.

## 4. Million-Fold

The only way to truly know if you hold a conviction is to meet with resistance  
The Complete Transmissions [Waggener, Paul]

Perhaps they will teach that the tenet is wrong which says that a man is the quotient of one million divided by one million, and will introduce a new kind of arithmetic based on multiplication: on the joining of a million individuals to form a new entity which, no longer an amorphous mass, will develop consciousness and an individuality of its own with an 'oceaning feeling' increased a million fold

Darkness and Noon [Koestler, Arthur]

When the woman spoke English, the volunteers understood her story, and their brains synchronized. When she had activity in her *insula*, an emotional brain region, the listeners did too. When her *frontal cortex* lit up, so did theirs. By simply telling a story, the woman could plant ideas, thoughts and emotions into the listeners' brains

Ncbi.nlm.nih.gov [Hasson, Uri]

### **I. 2038 e.v.**

He -on the solstice- wore the mask of the ancients.

As he breathed into -and through- it, the *nanobots* double checked their three codes and ran the algorithms.

He released the bolt and thumbed the safety on his carbine to the 6 o'clock and moved out of the van and into the lot of the Wells Fargo in downtown Denver on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2038. The mask was black, and blank, and eager to be looked at, as it was a repository of cosmic nimbus and light waves that move in the wind. The mask would hide not just his face on its side, but the world on the other. For while he wore it, the world was -as it really was- unseen. Its malice, its horror, its power over him was as blank as the amoral stares of those that would see it as they saw everything else.

*The man must create the world with his eyes, not merely see it; passively. That is not how eyes work. The face, he*

thought, *must be there to give the world a face. His was occluded from everyone, and theirs, was hidden from him* .

First, the *bots* were to surround him as he entered the bank and emit a small electrical charge in the direction of each person within seven meters. This charge would penetrate the skull and target the *nucleus accumbens* with enough voltage -7mv- to disrupt the intake of norepinephrine, epinephrine, and dopamine in the *hippocampus* and the *visual cortex*. The *thalamus* too would be surrounded with pulses of electricity at the pre-synaptic junctions to prevent sufficient calcium loading and cause a misfire in the region.

The *visual cortex* of the witnesses -his witnesses- would work just fine at the eye and upon the cortical tissue, but the brain would have no idea what it was looking at; it would be as if they were all looking at a flame, a fog, phlogiston of half ghost and half beast. They would be useless to law enforcement as witnesses in every way. They would be unable to attach meaning to what they saw; this -it turns out- is a simple thing to disrupt in the brain of man.

He had embedded second-order *bots* into each POLICE patch and badge that he wore; these emitted tiny overriding bursts of red and blue along light-wave spectrums that allowed the brain -of any witness- to stabilizing neuro-chemically for two seconds as the eyes glanced upon them. It would be the only thing the witnesses' cortex could link up to the sense-making part of the brain. They -when they looked upon him- saw clouds of nameless color and inarticulate form except when they read the word POLICE and this would allow each brain, each *visual cortex* to assume they had just seen a cop, a legitimate authority, and nothing else would obtain or stick or resonate.

And thus they would defer to him at once.

This is how the human brain works, it makes sense of what it can -which is so very little of what is actually there- and

the left hemisphere then draws a little map -of friend or foe, cop or robber- and implicitly says of anything off the map, *there be dragons*.

The *bots* second code would be to emit a light-wave warping corona around his face, so that the digital surveillance would be able to pick up light and image around him, but it too would be distorted, showing a black fog, a cumulous of gauzy, impenetrable data-loss. The FBI and CBI and DPD would look at the images from all sixteen cameras and see only this man-shape from the ground up, and then his head as black as a raven's, like Horus, like a man whose head has been replaced with a volcanic eruption of black birds and their smoky exhalation of breaths. It would be contained, but diffuse and amorphous and unable to be identified even by the lava god's own kith and kin. Like a damaged right hemisphere in a stroke, all the birds would look the same to the once subtle mind of the ornithologist of just a minute ago, but not the eye -held *incomunicado* - which saw it all.

The eye would again see, but not today, not him, and the camera too would be of no use as he took whatever he wanted.

*The mountain of no name*, these islanders would say. He called them this as he pondered what they'd think of him. *The crater where identity goes to return to the earth, the mantle, the iron core in molten form*, he thought they'd say.

The cops would say less than this; the cops would just say, "*fucking, shit.*" And they'd say it with pique and vex and irritation.

As he walked to the bank, his dog, the two-year-old Malamute trotted to keep pace. He too had markings that read POLICE written on each flank, in black and white; a Manichean patch, on an LBE that Jack had saddled upon him whilst stroking the black and grey and white coat; building static up in the hand, the dog, the air. The dog's coat would

look black and tan and his face elongated -ears erect- like an GSD.

He too was disguised.

The customers wore N95 masks until they showed their vaccination IDs, chips implanted that read off the list of their immunity to SARS, SARS-II, MERS, and more. Once cleared by the guard stationed at the entrance- they removed their masks and were allowed inside the bank.

Jack Four wore olive drab and dark-earth gear, with law enforcement badging on the back and sleeve, and he had a radio mic strapped to his load bearing equipment that squawked as he ran; it chirped with the real chatter of real cops he had gained access to with the stolen band-codes that were insufficiently encrypted against theft as they flew through the common air.

His 9mm was holstered -cross draw- on the vest, with three magazine pouches on his right side, each full with two carbine thirty-round magazines, snug, loaded with the black nickel of .308 rounds. His SCAR-19 was suppressed and mottled with digital camouflage. His mask was smooth and holed at the eyes and mouth, almond shaped and long at the chin as if covering a beard; a vulnerable neck.

His face too was smooth, hydrated, and his beta-blockers had been released; he felt no different than if he was walking into the bank to cash a check; this is why psychopaths can act this way, they feel no fear. But he was not a psychopath and so he needed his natural reactions tamped down, delayed or denuded. And the PGC did all that for him on command. Fear would be banished as if he had a tamping rod through the frontal lobe too. He could become unfeeling with the flip of an inner switch.

His hands did not shake with adrenaline, his heart did not flood with backwashed cortisol, his lungs did not take short

and fast breaths. His feet did not overrun their mark.

His heart rate was 55.

As he entered he did not raise the carbine. He walked to the bank manager's office and asked her through the black hockey mask to accompany him to the vault; he said, *accompany me*, and she rose and moved quickly as if she had in fact seen the police. The squawking radio, the badging, the tone all made her move with the fear of failure; not fear of the unknown. She wanted to please this officer, she thought.

She was not coerced.

The dog trotted along as some bank personnel smiled at his noble gait and augmented *Matanuska* mien, they saw the word POLICE and little else. The vault had two stacks of bricked money, still in cellophane; they had arrived last night with the armored truck for Friday's paycheck cashing.

He took out his black tanto knife and cut the ribbons of clear plastic and asked her to hold open the bag he handed to her.

She held it and he loaded the money in and asked if any of the banded money had tracking devices, to which she said *no* . The dog sat and faced the vault door as Jack loaded 450,000 dollars into one bag in forty-five, \$10,000 stacks. He took the bag over his shoulder and pressed the carbine to his side as he jogged -with the dog- to the exit two-hundred sixty-nine seconds since he had entered it. The bank personnel looked at him like a wind blown in by doors left open in a storm.

They were slightly nervous at the prompting of the *basal ganglia* , which responds to sounds a full half second faster than the *neo-cortical* regions he had taken off-line in them; their skin was slightly damp. If anyone had done a *galvanic skin conductance* test this would have been revealed. But,

they themselves, the left hemisphere -the part of the mind that makes flat maps of this topological world- that part was certain this was just nature blowing in and around them this AM. *It was just the way things were in this world of ours* , they thought some version of, as they tried not to consciously articulate what they deeply felt as this *policeman* jogged past with a bag.

The cameras recorded everything with fidelity except his face; the tellers never once even thought to hit the alarm. When asked, they had said they *saw him* but didn't think it was a robbery at all; and that they were as confused as the *feds* and as baffled as one another -they compared notions in whispered tones- and when they saw the footage played back they were in awe at what they had missed in real time; real life.

They thought maybe the air itself -that which stood between a man and their own eyes- was unreliable, that maybe they'd fallen prey to a hex or that -in hind-sight- their vision might need checked. They questioned everything but the vulnerability of their own brains to see what was there.

Isaiah -from the lab- watched the imaging and de-scrambled it and saw the mask, and knew it was Jack.

*The mask was designed for me* , Isaiah thought; and he knew that now. Jack had scrambled surveillance and eye witnesses, the mask would be redundant, and thus only for the prying eyes of anyone who had the algorithm to de-code the false-imaging of the *bots* .

That would only be Isaiah as Jack well knew.

He had left a playing card on the stack of cash in the vault; sliced in half, from lower left corner to the upper right; just a joker card with a 'j' in *lieu* of the whole word written out. The joker avatar was a like an old 19<sup>th</sup> century medical drawing of a vivisected man, with the left hemisphere cleaved and

exposed, the spine and lungs intact, and then the addition of a scrawl of hand-written *laughter-of-the-madman* escaping the laid open trachea. It escaped from half an amused mouth; an amuse *bouche* that showed half a tongue and half a horseshoe of teeth.

Isaiah got the entire fucking point.

The laughter escaping had been cut in half when the card itself was cut.

The card was mottled brown and tea stained and looked old and worn and foxed. Its back was matte black, almost grey with just the word, the semaphore *-/ Jacks -* embossed upside-down to the opposite face; stamped into it in a gloss black typewriter font.

Isaiah knew that the letters cut off on the other slice were, *B / ax*; and that the other half to the card was safely in Jack Four's possession. It was a warning to Isaiah to back off and not interfere or he -Jack Four- would blow the whole thing up and run his mouth and who knows what else. Jack would not *want* to do this, it was implied, it would be tantamount to cutting off his own finger, maybe the thumb, but he was not bluffing, and thus the Medea gene worked two ways now.

Jack was saying, *if you stop me for the greater good, for any goddamn reason, I'll stop all you too. I'm on my own now, stay out of it; or I'll make sure you all get involved. I'll make you carry the whole genome with you and lay it out in the open if one fingertip is placed into the void. In for a dime in for a dollar*, he had said, without saying one word.

Isaiah watched as the digital footage from all surrounding businesses caught his escape until he hit the frontage road in the grey van driving along I70 and headed west.

Nineteen black vans, Seventy-eight white vans, and an even two of blue traveled over the Vail Pass within the time frame that would be assumed from his last vector and timestamp.



But, none of them were the one they sought, the cops had detailed this in the reports Isaiah read. They had stopped ninety-nine vehicles by the time they had reached Eagle; and Grand Junction in one case.

The Governor had been called -at 1709hrs- because Isaiah decided to offer his help. Sou's own AG had not made mention of the crime. Isaiah would not get involved in the way he would be most effective; he would just help the police like a CI might. He didn't help them with the technology at all; he just told them where the man would be next. Well, he would tell the Governor when he arrived, which he was scheduled to be at the lab in three hours. He was *en route* already from Denver. They would need travel at an average of eight-one miles an hour to be on time.

The Governor would see to it that they did.

Jack was exacting *personal* revenge, on all his perceived enemies, the enemies of the genome; for him this meant him personally and through time. Most people have no idea how timeless the male's genome can be, how it is neither subjected to, nor recognizes that fourth wall that separates the audience from the play.

If his wife -our man's wife- had sex *before* him, she was as guilty as if she had sex *without* him; jealousy was permanent, omnipotent; ubiquity in time. Even if honor cultures collapsed hundreds of years ago -the *Kanagawa Jōyaku* in Japan, above the *al-Quabail* mountain line of the *Kabyle's* Algeria, on the now pacific plains of the landed *Comancheria* - the neurons of DNA that made the men who built and maintained those cultures did not. They -the pieces, the gene- were still erect, still upright, they still obtained.

Men were new, different, unique and hemmed in by time. But genes were exact copies, had always lived, had never

died. *This was the most important fact in all the other shit any of us said* , Isaiah thought.

*Modern men thought they were civilized, and that all men were, and that all men ought to be. No barbarism was allowed. But outlawing light doesn't douse the sun's flame. Men will just cover it with a hand or draw the shades.*

Jack felt all personal revenge was a larger revenge, that it worked up from the cell to the body while -in contrast- a stratagem that working on the body did not always redound down to the cell. Chemo didn't always kill the cancer. To bomb a city did not reliably take out the man you hunted. But to kill the right man -men- could -in fact- restore the city to health. Jack thought upward while Blax thought down, and Isaiah had to try to keep them from crashing into one another as they passed like ships in the night.

Each story Blax had told *of such and such bank or this or that guy, this firm or that house, this agency or that lady* , Jack had listened to each word and stored them in his mind for just this time. Wells Fargo was not the best bank to hit in pragmatic terms, it had the second lowest cash reserves that Friday, and Jack well knew it. He took their money to embarrass them and get revenge for their refusal to protect Blax when Michael Swinyard had cashed a phony check on his Flat Black Ink Corp account twenty-three years ago. \$450,000 as recompense for \$3,000 that had been taken with a lecture -Blax told them- from a banker when he had called to protest.

Jack had remembered each detail of each story Blax and told.

Jack -as he thought of the disparity in what he took from what was taken- thought he always acted *with interest* . He liked the double *entendre* of the word.

When they -Wells Fargo- had called his brother and wife to demand the whereabouts of Blax himself -lamenting the overdue payments on the car he had borrowed \$30,000 of the \$60,000 cash he had spent on it- Blax had told the Jacks how the wife and brother were sure to twist the knife and make him feel humiliation and chagrin.

Jack had hated that story each time he heard it and was furious that nothing was done to make things right.

They -Blax's own family- had not asked about the details, about the crimes of Wells Fargo -the largest corporate criminal of that time- they had not asked why he had defaulted, or who owed their brother, their son, money. *No*, Jack thought, *they only insisted that he need pay his creditors back*. His family didn't know or care that Wells Fargo -under Wachovia's DBA- had been accused of laundering \$378.4 billion of the Mexican Drug Cartels' money and thus contributing to thousands of murders. These facts just get lost in the minds of people with no true north; blizzards of ugly facts that blind the unsure, the liberal, the ecumenical who clumsily paw at the mote in your eye not the beam in their own.

They had not cared that he had been ripped-off of everything by an amalgam of malice and piling on by scheming chimps and their apparatchiks of the system itself. They had not asked about the bank itself that had helped the thieves abscond with his loot.

Blax's brother had not cared at all, and neither had his little *bourgeois* wife, with her allegiance to the rules, not the *code it stood for*. They had fealty to the law, not *justice* itself. *How*, Jack had asked himself, *can you reach people with the same moral reasoning of the 8-year-old, those who are able to explain the rules, but still blithely unaware of the concept of justice itself; one that cannot have it explained that often the rules themselves are the very barrier to justice ?* This -

like most things- was metabolic. Blax's family were just metabolically shallow and simple and stunted people.

Isaiah played back the night Blax had told the Jacks the tale, and it was almost banal. Isaiah sought out Jack Four's mindset, he sifted through each day and night he'd spent with Blax. It lacked any obvious thing about it that would make it seem the kind of thing to react this way to; unless, of course, you knew just what kind of genes these men all had.

The genes stored exact copies of everything. Genes never forgot.

Blax was devastated, not by the loss of the \$3,000 -the amount of the forged check that Michael used- not the loss of revenue. Blax was devastated by the *malice*, the fact that his partner and a man who he *naively* thought was a friend, had stolen from him. He was wounded by the indifference -which was tantamount to malice- that his bank, his *own* bank, who had made money off him for over ten years, as he ran over a million dollars of income through their institution, had showed when the guy had literally laughed at him, and insulted him and told him quote, "*you ought to look after your checkbook better, sir.*"

*Such little things seem nothing, until they happen to you and they happen in the right place at the right time like one allele in a chromosome, in a genome in a man, in a family, in a tribe, in a history of being fucked with by the rich, the smug, the ruling class,* Jack thought.

Countries are not laws, but customs, not jails but *mores*. Countries are built and maintained on trust not cops and their weaponry. And America had no trust; nobody believed in anything. *And like a junky, it needed to hit bottom before it will ever change,* Jack now thought.

That kind of disrespect is the thing most people endure each day at the filthy hands and sloppy mouths of functionaries and these massive institutions, these autocrats of finance and brigands of business. Most people barely register the insult at all. But Blax took it right to heart and when he recounted the story that night to the Jacks, they all felt his humiliation, their own humiliation; *the Priest, shit, the Pope himself, slapped in the face by the coxcomb jester of the King*, they had felt.

Three Jacks of Four blamed the banks, but Jack Four blamed their LT.

Jack Four had not known what he'd do, but he knew his body had roiled inside, and that proteins were coding for biochemical release, not for inhibition.

Although 25% of all man's coding neural proteins do in fact inhibit at the level of brain-action -the most of any species- this most careful and cautious and halting of species, in some men at some times, the brakes slip, the reins are released, a man takes no more shit.

Jack was a kind of witness to bio-warfare inside the sinew and tissue and cortical map; he was overrun with armies swarming like iron-age *Gauls* and bronzen Romans both, blood-brain barrier like the Rhine crossed first by Caesar's engineers and worker-soldiers. Then he was the ground trod by the giant *Gauls* with painted face -battered hair and of Nordic race- jamming body and bone and balls at the water with Mediterraneans and Macedonians and these Roman Spaniards combined like virus and bacteria, like rack of elk and flank of wolf, like King's orders and Priest's blessing and Soldier's pike.

Like a planted flag atop a crenulated wall.

His brain came alive with vex and thirst for blood for all.

He sat on the common pad, he listened to his heart beat as the Jacks rambled on and on of this and that. He had sided eyed Blax and Isaiah -from above and within- saw the face deform.

Jack was enraged, battle cries went up inside him as the fire of the night burned on and the Jacks sharpened their knives or waterproofed their clothes preparing for the hunt that the snow would preclude this month of October the report had said. The *Wet Canyon* valley would get up to fifty inches of snow they'd said, and yet they assumed the hunt was on until Blax said otherwise. They checked their gear as the old man spoke. The fire was still high.

The *agoge* remained full of yellow light.

Blax had leaned on the skull of a black bear with tea-lights candled in its eyes and told them of his surprise -when after his defeat by friends and banks and even family- of his surprise -he had repeated- that he was all alone on this globe. He had repeated his astonishment with chagrin; and he admitted that he had felt foolish for all of it. *But* -Blax had thought and said once or twice- *these men needed to know these things* . He thought the whole truth was best; a good unto itself. Each story he told of betrayal seemed both more banal and more outrageous than the last; the accumulation of disgrace more than the sum of its parts somehow. He thought honesty was the only thing a man could control.

Blax thought that this was the sign of the -finally- wised up man. Even as the whole world told a man to shut his mouth and not once complain.

Three of four Jacks took note of the facts; the lesson implied; the wisdom that might be gleaned.

But Jack Four took each story as a history of something deeper, something more amiss, something that needed

fixed. He saw the arc as a line that could be straightened. He thought he could fix not just the now and the future, but too the past. He didn't know it, but he thought of the cosmic math.

"Non associative," Isaiah said under his breath with vex.

Jack Four thought that a stoic was a man who couldn't control his environment and so he resorted to controlling himself.

He stared at Blax that night and saw empty hands, deeds undone, equations unsolved; half -one-third- a man.

"Never be surprised when they all come for you," Blax had said as the lights flicked shadows up from below and the eyes blinked long and slow. He had breathed heavy and deeply from the door jamb, seated on the concrete floor, as they all sat in the courtyard under the H-beams and on the concrete pad; greasing now their simple 700 Remingtons and more complex .338 Lapuas, opening the breaches and swabbing out the wet oils and checking the bore for occlusion and debris. It had been quiet when Blax didn't speak and warm where it wasn't cold behind wherever they faced the fire.

"For that is the only way any of them *can* come for you, all together, in packs, swarms, just like gangs. The modern male cannot fight one on one. So, when it rains, it will pour," Blax had said that night. He'd poured himself a drink, held the bottle up and out to Jack One.

Jack Four had felt an inability to see forward, as if the visions were knocked down by the wind, by the *corvus moneduloides* as they flapped those meter-wings above in his dreams of the pacific; as if his eyes only looked back into his own skull, as if turned around. He saw the genes that coded for his innate pride and the whatever it was that made his hands manipulate the world with deftness and

whatever it was that let his words flow like many birds tying twine around the trees in avian nets to capture food and enemies; *Shanghai* black flies that rivaled them for supremacy of the air.

Blax had told them of the day his father had come to elevation with him, back in June of 2017 -when they were all just negative three- and they -Blax and his father- had had a *contretemps* that ended in several threats. Blax -in his version of events- had given his father all benefit of the doubt, asking the older man to stand up for him and certain he would do so, until he -the father- had finally barked out that he *didn't make mere threat, that he blew that guy's fucking brains out.*

"Those were the exact words, he said, *I blew his fucking brains out*," Blax recounted, "and that was it. I drove those dusty roads with rocks to my lee side and pasture and river to my starboard, and we drove in silence as I waited for him to expatiate. But he did not. My father was secretive; the opposite of me. He held each great thing he had done inside and let it out only as a bomb to blow up the rest of him, to crash the bricks of the edifice down upon what a thrown open window might have revealed just a glimpse of.

"I had known what he was capable of, I had seen it, and I had known the job -the charter- of OSI. I had held the guns and sat in the armored diplomatic Mercedes and seen the terrorist *wanted* posters on the wall, the *Bonh ö effer* gangs of western Germany, the murky eyes of Soviet spies. I had seen him disappear for months then return with black and grey beard and manichean eyes that absorbed more and more dark than light.

"I had seen him unholster his sidearm and our mother pretend her husband didn't carry -or need to carry- a gun at all. I had seen him genuflect to her, refusing to chance -to risk- the undermining of the marriage to this woman, the



bearer of his children; one of which was his scion; heir apparent. I had seen what he put up with, so that he may never be like *his* father, and leave a woman and child, *his* woman and child- merely from pride.

"Each cure has a bit of disease, and I knew that my child, if I was to have a son, would find fault in me this same way; he'd suss out cowardice like I did, in my old man, or notice the tyranny that overflowed, as I did also in my father. The dry desert wash overflows more easily than the four-season stream. Think on that.

"Each man is an ocean of rising waves and lowering dips; he's the flames that nibble at the tops of trees and the water that pools near feeder roots; the white light of approaching conflagrations; the dark soil of carbon and regrowth. I know this. And yet I still hated him, I hated his tyranny and his weakness both. I knew it was unfair and I did it anyway.

"I hated the way he let a woman run him and how yet he never allowed his -well, whatever I am- he never allowed it to grow into a man. It was like he was certain that his pride would not be the only thing to die, that he'd choke all root of it off in his youngest son, the one, the one that carried that same set of alleles, the ones that would never put up with anyone's shit, especially some goddamn woman's. Ah, but the genes are not the man; and the best individual is not the craquelured city. The small -the one- can be proud, autonomous, free, but the large -the complex- it must flex; compromise. In fact, the first multicellular life was a compromise between mitochondrial DNA and the cell it squatted inside," Blax had said as they wiped down their rifles and drank from the London glass.

"Jewel Camp, was my grandmother, and she was a bitch." This idea of a *bitch* though, exploded, he thought her mean, and shallow, and promiscuous and callous toward her son -

his father- and cynical and exactly the type to survive when shit got rough. She was a survivor and without that, he'd not be alive to complain. He hated to admit it; but it was true.

"She had no sense at all of what was too far, and she ran my own mother into the ground and ran off five men -half of them into the soil of a cemetery- from my paternal grandfather to the final one in 1979 as they divorced in Paris, Texas while I was just five years old," he said as his ambivalence rattled around like bullet in barrel; like comet elliptical; like bird tied to a string.

"My father knew that he had come from men who cannot stand women like this, my own father hated his own mother for her uppity, mouthy, female ways. But, each man has a crucible, a touchstone, a thing that burns brightest among the pagan ruins of it all. And for my father it was the pain of growing up without his father; and he was not ever going to allow a woman to run him off; he would lose each battle in order to win this war."

Blax paused and stared at the places on their faces where lines would appear; furrows like rows of *décavaillonnage* on their still smooth brows; like heaps of snow, red with burst heart of prey, trails of capillary, bumps about the nose; *teeth chipped, stained, fuck who knows ?* he thought. *And streak of grey in beard and mane* . He saw how their gentleness would change. Where meanness and rage would appear like weeds, soft idealism replaced by rough deeds. He looked at where they bent and creased; at the blood and pollen on knuckles; dirt on knees.

"But I saw only the lost chargers and soldiers down, the broken axles of chariot, the flesh and shields on the ground, I saw only blood and treasure lost, not kingdom gained; things long-term? No way. I saw nothing of what he saw; and even that is not right. Because my father saw the losses, he saw them more than I could with my young and still simple

eyes. He had to eat shit from my mother a thousand times before I was even awake each day. And yet he stayed. He stayed no matter the hate, no matter the cost to pride, no matter what his son spied. He shrank and yet did right by me.

“And if I was a good man, a decent man -a man of understanding and wisdom- I would forgive him for all this and see how his cowardice was actually strength; that he sacrificed himself so that I may grow up with a father. He refused to give himself the gift he wanted most: the right to walk away from those who flay the skin and boil the mind, those who injure a proud man’s pride. He stayed no matter how it deformed his soul. And this was his war and he won it. And I -to this day- declared it a total loss.

“But -so- I am not a good man, I am a proud man. Savvy?” he asked. He expected them to see he held opposites in mind, saw where he was wrong, lamented where he was right.

“I’m not good, but sometimes I see greatness, and yet I see more and more that greatness must be chosen among the gods or underground but never in the places in between. And I fear I chose the wrong domain in which to be great. My head might have been too far from where I tread,” he said. He looked down at his hands, the fingers shook, the drink too looked like pebbles had been dropped in the center; amber concentric circles and ripples that could only be assuaged by drinking it all down. And so he did. He gulped the whisky and felt nothing in the throat; barely even warmth in the belly. His legs seemed long to him; his boots like blocks. He wanted to take back each word.

But -as the weather unleashed cold flakes of snow- instead he spoke.

“And, so,” Blax paused and searched his mind but found it empty, pulled lower drawers, of throat and heart, “there’s

no room in caves, or between the boughs, nor in the spaces betwixt the wolfish teeth or in the holes of the sunken reefs, there is no abandoned -ceded- ground for that kind of mistake and he made the largest one: to not know your son; to turn a fragile -upright- back on a wild beast still on all fours.

“He should have seen the pique; he had to see his own eyes in mine. How can a man hate his own mother and not see the hate in his son’s eyes for that man’s wife? I despised my mother, with her cowardice and stupid fucking timid ways; her lack of courage and brave face. I hated the way she emasculated me and heaped the civilizing ways of our bullshit culture on me, I was raised in the modern way. I, a child of the ancient world, a boy that ought be raised by wolves before left to the evil ways of that woman, and he abandoned me to her!

“He fucking abandoned me just as his father had abandoned him; ah, but he stuck around to watch, like some observing god, some non-intervening being, that sees but does not intervene. He would claim to never intervene; this was a little motto of his; the irony not lost on me.

“Oh, but I know, I know it as sure as I know the fates will have my neck one day. I know that I am like the oedipal son doomed to live out the fates no matter how far I run away. I swore I’d never abandon my sons, just like my father swore his own oath and I know that my vasectomy at twenty-six was no apotropaic against this fate; but merely a human delay of the natural forces that make mockery of all our plans. For here I am with four -and how many more?- sons of my own now.

“I cleaved and cauterized those *vas deferens* and thought I had prevented the next generation of failure and abandonment; the ignoble and emasculate decline. And for 40-odd years that was true, and then you four boys, now

men -I mean no disrespect, *men* - I know that at least one of you will nurse a secret grudge and feel -not wrongly- that I have failed in some crucial way. I can feel it like I feel the cold between me and that fire over there. The light reaching me but not the warmth. I see what I cannot yet feel; may never feel.

"And yet, I stupidly continue to tell the truth, as if this is some incantation, some alchemic buttress, bulwark, bastion against the hatred, the disappointment you will -some of you will- feel. My faults, my cowardice, my tyranny, my lies, all of it will stack up somewhere, some counting house of the gods and you will visit it in quiet times, in small hours, in the space you carve out for yourself. I have a feeling the gods will allow you access to my worst secrets even as I try to tell on myself first and loudest and with most vulnerable chagrin; I know even this will be held against me, that my honesty itself will be seen as weak and tawdry and unmanly. *Whining* it will be called.

"I know it because I'm doing exactly what my father did, fighting the last war. I am trying to learn from his example, I am attempting to do what he did not and repeating it somehow anyway. A man is no match for the vagaries of fate, no match at all," he said and knew he was about to bring up the letter the Bust had sent and he felt his guts squirm and his mouth become inflexible. He felt the brain scramble around for anything else to talk about. But he plowed on against himself.

"Simone Weil -a Jewish woman that she wrote to me about and so I looked her up- and anyway, she -Ms. Weil- she trekked all the way to Germany in 1932 and saw -and stated in print- that the trade unionists were no match for the Fascists. She saw the poetry of force; she saw the truth. So, why is this fate gauzy and meaningless to me?

“And I guess it is folly to even try, by we are men who try, are we not? Is that not who we are? Men who try no matter the obviousness of failure, the total destruction that is guaranteed, we are men who face this anyway. The obvious coward runs away, we, the subtle coward fights in a stupid way, because he has -we have- not the humility, the sagacity to fight in a way that might actually prove victorious if he is made to look a fool while doing it.

“We prefer poems of defeat to the mere prose of victory,” Blax said and the Jacks twisted the lips and nodded a bit.

“My father was sometimes willing to look a fool, for the greater good, and I hope my revelations to you of the times I took their shit, the times I failed to exact revenge, will make you see that somehow I knew that I was destined for a greater good; and that to sheath my sword was the truly courageous act. But we both know it was cowardice then, not bravery, not far-sightedness. We all know I just failed then and this great good fell into my lap like the snow, like this autumnal snow,” he said as the flakes began to drop fast and head straight down in heaviness and melt on the warmish ground still having the heat, the thermal gain, from their summer.

“This is the only thing my father did not know that I know, that our failure to act in the moment was not from some long-term vision, it was just myopic cravenness, and it happened to comport with some larger vision we said we wanted as it came later into view.

“But if he was so far sighted as he would claim- eating shit and letting a woman raise his kids, so they may have a father- then he would have seen that his son would grow up to wipe the whole fucking seed out just to watch it die; just to prove that all your long-term plans can be wiped out in one night with the action of one man with one black idea in his mind.

"I wanted to prove to him that all that building, all that effort and compromise and genuflecting and all that bowing and scraping and all that storing up of nuts for winter can be reduced to ash in sixty seconds as the youngest son kills each one of them and refuses himself the right to breed that seed any further on this ground. On this ground in which I cannot tell if it is too noble for what is tawdry in me, in us, or if we are too proud, too rightly noble for this sullied society of man. I am of two minds," he said even though he knew this supposed mind of two was made of an unequally divided line. He poured another drink, not offering it to anyone this time. He just set the London glass on the ground and let the fire light illuminate the square glass and amber restorative in his hands.

"If he was so far sighted," he began, "he would have seen that capacity in me, from early, early on. The same part of him that allowed him, quote *to blow his enemy's fucking brains out*, was in me too. And he would have seen it and not allowed my wrath to be pointed back at him or his well laid plans. He would have made certain of it, like the way one locks up the guns or separates the oily rags from the source of flame, hides the keys to the cache of booze; never, ever, lets their son get his hands on whatever most destructive thing lies inside each man's own armory of heart.

"So, I reject his long-term thesis, for it lacks the vision to see the obvious: you cannot have a son just like you not grow up just like you when you fail to raise him, when you abandon him to the void of the mother, the chaos of the feminine again and again; just like was done to you.

"His mother raised him and my mother raised me. And yet he could not see? He could not see this?" Blax shook his head and Jack Four just kept his mind recording and his heart boarding sailor after sailor to man the decks, the long

guns, the windlass too. He saw the ship make sail, get under way. He saw the sea not the shore, not the town, not the country itself. He saw himself cut lines on his forearm as if for bars of music, as if to tally, as if to mark twain. He poured -in this reverie- black ink over red blood and he looked aloft and yet closed the eyes. He looked exclusively inside.

"Why do I not buy it?" Blax asked of his own question, the Jacks had left their actions open, their bolts back. They said -none of them- not a word.

"No, you'll notice that I never let any of you be raised by women, I made certain that you'd grow up by and as men. And yet, I know the fates have in-built me a surprise. I knew it and that is why I made that Medea gene, I built it as bulwark against the fates, and of course, ensured that the fates would win by way of my own plans; that the unironic would be the only thing avoided. I made sure of it, with a *bravura* that now seems not just wrong, but insane, blinded by some trick of the gods themselves. It is so obvious as to be ridiculous," Blax had said. He forgot he'd already said all this a hundred times to himself; a dozen to them.

"Why when he said he blew that guys brains out did you know that he was untrustworthy?" Jack two asked as he ate some meat he had laid upon the base of the fireplace to sear. He hated to see Blax break over and over like this, each time go a bit more mad. He intervened with questions as if that would staunch the hemorrhaging.

"Because he prefaced it with the insistence that he never merely threatened anyone, that he was a man of action, and that my request for him to stand up for me symbolically -for I had asked him to defend my honor with his own friend, Carey Kempf who had ripped me off and called me," he had paused, "and called me a thief all over town and tried to fuck my girl and on and on- and I asked him to say



something, you know, defend the honor of his boy. And his response was he didn't ever threaten, he acted, and I knew this was not just a lie, but a dirty lie. It was so evil and black a lie that I knew I'd never forgive it," Blax said as Jack Four wished the man would just shut up now, that enough was enough, that this was all too much to be said aloud.

"Why?" Jack three asked. Jack Four glared at him now too; building up his hatred of not just the Lt but each Jack for dragging this shit out.

"Because the man threatened me a thousand times, threatened to kill me, threatened it more than once.

"And when I brought that up he justified it- imagine threatening to kill your own son at age ten for checking the circuit breakers in a storm, to accuse me of turning off the power when I was trying to restore it? He literally threatened to kill me for checking the circuit breakers; and I had a friend with me, and it was one of the most humiliating events of my life.

"And so, I knew for a fact he threatened all the time. And his insistence that he was this big tough guy was a lie. He threatened a little boy, his own son, for attempting to fix a common problem they all shared.

"You want to do some real evil in this world, wait for someone to do something good and then punish them for it," Blax had said as Isaiah watched the digital visual replay in the lab; he watered orchids and laid crickets in the tanks with the scorpions. He measured the phenol between the leafy plants and the patterns the wasps ran; the caterpillars as ratio to moths. "My father was a, *is a* coward, he picks on the weak and refuses to do anything to the strong."

Isaiah had watched the data come in from each Jack as Blax spoke in this recalled memory of *Lot 45* . Isaiah saw the gene-expression correlates for rage in Jack Four rise like a

mercury thermometer; undramatically, unmitigated nor deterred; call and response of nature on both sides of the calibrating glass.

The boy was now a man who would exact not just revenge on each of his adoptive-genomic-meta father's -Blax's- enemies, but on the father, on Blax, himself, to show him what a *real* man's life was about.

Jack Four was saying, *fuck all this long-term planning bullshit, all these grand designs on saving humankind, the West, fuck them and fuck you for even wanting it . Each man must only want what he can control, what is close, local, immediate*, Jack would feel and think as if he could -if necessary- dismantle this weapon of mind malice, disarm it all just before the launch; that if he changed his mind -he told himself- he could call it all off. Unaware of ballistic physics and the velocity of thought and the *force majeure* of man, Jack thought he had a chance.

Jack said all this with the same sight-blindness to the truth that the trickster coyote of the Fates occluded and cursed as he spied from the edge of the fire; spied on and in his -spied on and in their- genome once and one million times. They all heard the lupine howl, and then the chatter of the 'yote response; the birds flying in the dark; the snow between them all and the lunar rock. Isaiah gleaned the data from the recorded night and noted also that Blax had felt elevated cortisol and the activation of the *hippocampus* and *thalamus* in this recreation, re-birth of the most painful memories that he felt his Jacks needed to know. The recapitulation of old pain to reveal the *cicatrix manet* as warning and explanation both.

He felt they needed to know that there was cowardice in their alleles, and that they needed to watch out for it; an enemy within who would swear to protect them.

And -Blax would think- that they would often pick on the weak and excuse the strong, and that they must question each impulse due to this. Jack Four took it the other way, that he -Blax- was refusing to do his duty by allowing his father and older brother to escape his wrath. *They were older, larger, and Blax was letting them get away with it*, Jack thought with righteousness and anger wiring his young brain in a brace.

Blax had of course outgrown in size and martial capacity and malice each man, his brother and father both; they were in fact so weak as to be as women in his eyes, and this was why he didn't marshal all his vengeance against them long ago. He felt it was too easy to kill such weak men. He and Jack would never see eye to eye on this. For Jack, his -Blax's- abeyance was cowardice regardless of the *why*.

Isaiah took note of each man's DTI and fMRI data and endocrine system reports and felt he had a good enough idea of what each man felt and thought. He watched the orchids like velvet hold water in large drops upon each impermeable petal.

Jack was now, with these goddamn robberies and murders and ostentatious displays of vengeance, showing the old man up and that is how Isaiah knew that he was heading to Texas next, to exterminate whatever was left of the seed; his brother, Travis, wife and son and daughter, would be cleansed from the earth. The mother was long dead; the father had dementia now too, at ninety-one. He had survived for sixteen years after his wife had died. And Jack Four was going to put him down as *coup de grace*; not to Lee, the father, but to Blax the son. He was going to do what ought have been done long ago; and he was going to make certain his gifts and punishments would be one thing, not two.

He would join each act as the world joined the light and the black.

Jack was sanctioning Blax's right to feel aggrieved, he was approving of his version of events and taking sides with him on who was right and who wrong; and he was sanctioning - that is to say, punishing- that same man, by carrying out the righteous executions that Blax himself ought to have. He was cleaning up the man's own mess. This was punishment by embarrassment, by humiliation; it was a note that said: *I think you had it right, your analysis was right, so why then did you fail to act? Are these failures to act of what you know is right, are they not the murders of one's own thoughts, one's most noble thoughts, was not your failure to act a murdering of the self? Well, if you will not then I shall; I'll carry the burden you set down.*

And anyone within this expanding but cloistered genetic map, this inflationary terrain with more dark matter than light, with more vacuum than populating material, with more God than man, any of the Jacks -or Blax himself- would know that Jack Four was right and there would be no way to argue out of it; the truth was already built into the genome. Jack Four was merely saying aloud what they all said in their heads; the counter arguments, the anti-thesis was voiced but weak and they knew it.

Isaiah had to decide in what order to act, how far to allow it.

It was not an easy thing to do; to discern. How much of Jack's efforts should be thwarted anyway, for he was not all wrong, no more than Blax was all wrong in his pique and path. *But* , Isaiah thought, *he had to be stopped at some point, for his plans, Isaiah's plans were not to be thwarted, at any price.* He had no intention of giving up on all the manifold ways; *all the efforts and all the shit I had put up with from* , he let himself think without filter, *these goddamn humans, these ants, these bugs, these prokaryotic*

*cells with consumption and excretion as their only capacity at all; these shallow beings all dressed up in big folks' clothes.*

Isaiah admired Jack, he did, but he was not going to let him get away with this shit. Isaiah let the recording of that night play in the background as he began to put all the pieces in place; in Texas and here too, in Colorado. He built algorithms and synopsis of the evidence and began tracking the areas around the homes and environments of Jack's next targets.

The *tableau* of that night, not so long ago, laid out -played out- in the dark as Isaiah handled these other things. He let it play on:

"My brother," Blax said, as the boys continued -as the snow melted on their hot hands and heads- to check their gear, grease their rifles, and make sure their skinning blades had edge for the three-day hunt, "he always accused me of cheating. But I wasn't playing the same game as him. He played checkers on the same board in which I was playing chess. And each time I moved this or that piece -this or that way- he'd abuse me for it, *you can't move your piece like that*, he'd say. And I'd have to remind him that this was not checkers, and see, I'd say, *see that piece that looks like a horsey, Travis, well, that is called a knight, and in my knight-errant way I will move him as per natural law, two up and one over* .

"I shall not take orders," Blax said, "on the higher game, from the lower man. I shall have my revenge, and as you ponder that you may -like the fates- ask yourself who raises this arm, who makes the sun run its errands about the sky, who gives man his desires, who gives horse his strength and mane?"

## II. 2020 e.v.

“So, what now?” Travis asked. The lab had trestles on the walls with starter ivy weaving through each square as the old foliage turned red and yellow behind; and he spied the large *stelae* all around. Their images were a tangle-nest; and they changed shape as he looked at different times; from different parts of the space. He noticed how the lab seemed to have no edges; it was dark behind them in this front quadrant.

“Now, you live your life,” MO said. He opened the eyes 11% more and turned the hands palm-up on his thighs. He measured the air around the brother’s nose and mouth. He loaded the joules of total metabolism within the brother from the last six minutes onto the cloud.

“I mean, is this ok to talk about or?” he asked. He stood there in the first quadrant of the lab and felt the breeze that blew across the room; carrying sounds from small things, smells of green, temperatures in layers like cold rivers within the sea. His shoulders hunched and dipped, his jaw barely moved.

It was a lot of information for him to absorb.

“No. You cannot even think of it. We fear that we may have a security leak, and so you must maintain even,” Isaiah stopped as he reformulated the sentence. “You can’t discuss it with the inmate -your brother- nor with yourself. You can’t even think of it. He has to continue to think -believe- that he must convince you to see it his way. This is crucial. He must never let up on his need to convince you.”

“Why?” Travis asked. He did not understand. He stared at Isaiah’s face and tried to look at the eyes, but they were shadowed and so he looked at the mouth; inside it was dark, he couldn’t see the teeth. The story they had told him had

begun to recede. The fossils of emotions and amber of information that remained he did not excavate.

He was thirsty; the mouth was dry.

"Because he has to keep activating that part of his brain. Dialectic activates the PFC and each level of the brain, from *basal ganglia* to *limbic* to *neo cortex* ; it's the one brain activity that aligns all three outside of," MO said but stopped mid-thought.

"Religious phenomenon," Isaiah said to fill in the gap.

"So, he has to argue with me to use -in order to use- his brain the way you want?" Travis asked.

"Yes, but not just argue, but *convince*. He has to try each and every way to convince you of his worth. If he stops trying, this won't work." Isaiah said.

He saw the *Broca's* and *Wernicke's* areas light up in Travis as simple -discrete- facts were now expressed; now after the story he'd been told. He then reviewed the brain scans from the previous ten minutes when the *spatio-temporal* regions activated in both speaker and listener as the story was told to him. *Like two neurons pre-loading, then firing and now wiring together, they loaded again in milliseconds and in volts like bolts but small. A story joined -fused- two brains, two men,* Isaiah thought as he watched the man's face; the lips hiding the teeth best he could, it seemed.

The *motor-cortex* lit up in the listener. Isaiah watched the fields of birds outside the lab; he watched the ivy make micro-phototropic moves underneath the LEDs.

The listener of a tale of manifold undertaking, a crewed action story -unlike mere discussion of *isolatoes* of facts- had specific regions alight. A story illuminated the areas of brain associated with motor movement. And this produced not just activity but anticipatory reward. *The listener to a*

*story begins to expect outcomes the same way they expect results when the body moves in the world; and stories have archetypes, which are a fancy way to say cliché.*

*And cliché allows the listener to finish the sentence first.*

*This links story-teller and listener as if they had -and were now engaged in- an adventure together as comrades in arms ,* Isaiah thought as the data from the *insula , parietal lobule* and the *inferior frontal gyrus* of Travis came in and made a map. Associated with *mirror-neurons* themselves, the map split in two as Isaiah read each side of the chart with each hemisphere of his own; in real time. It unfurled and revealed so much on a 2D plane that he saw a hundred thousand place-names. Isaiah tagged each thing relevant, charted a course, and rolled the map back up in the mind; then put it away.

He watched the historical account -on the cloud- of the neurons in the older brother.

They -the neurons in the past, of the record- were firing from the story they had told him before these last few sentences on *op-sec* and sequestration and the how & why of his behavior from here on out.

The *precuneus* and *dmPFC* all fired in ways that illuminated the rest of the brain. Moral reasoning and the seat of retributive violence shared the same space; anticipation and the *mesolimbic* pathway passed in the night; narrative and *motor-cortex* played telephone inside the head; they all plotted, pricked fingers, burnt tarot cards and shook hands.

"A drop of blood," he said.

It was the *dmPFC* that stored anger in the inmate for five-hundred times longer than most men; it was here that an inner story was thus told and heard and listened to: *payback is required of you, it is already written, already told; it's your fate, your story.* This was how a story would populate a



man's inner landscape, and activate *motor-cortical* zones. Wind the clock, release the spring, a humming automaton, an inner thing made manifest into the world like flocks of starlings.

Isaiah heard his own words now. The brother's and the inmate's history of words stopped.

He took another breath and counted it against his total.

*It was listened to* , he continued thinking, *because it mapped onto motor-cortex feedback, the way neurons fire in both the hand and the neck when a man rubs his own woe. There where the head lays upon the shoulders,* Isaiah thought as he saw the books -the novels, the stories- he had sent out by mail, by hand, by hook, by crook. He pictured them in route, beginning their journey to their recipients, then delayed in Des Moines, or Denver, or DC. He smiled as he thought of them at 30,000 feet, or underground as they traveled south by train or truck or tunnel. He imagined them arriving at homes, offices, warehouses. He saw them opened and perused, ignored, lamented or engaged with some fascination or outrage. He pondered how some would become engrossed and read along as if it was just a story; a story they could not put down. Others, he was certain, would figure the real plot out.

*How strange was it when the hand went numb as it rubbed the body,* he thought as he ruminated on such neural disconnect.

He built a world in his mind in which the tale would be told and infect the brain of the reader.

He saw it activate not merely the *Broca's* or *Wernicke's* zones -the mere language centers- but he saw it in the *motor-cortex* mirror-neurons, *the parts of the brain* , he repeated again, *that fire when a man moves in this physical world* . He saw the story plant an anecdote like a mottled

seed from heated cone carried by a blackened bird in its dark guts as it flew over the tenebrous sea.

He saw two birds fly in two directions, two stories to two men of two types and times.

He saw an island of fecund soil; a place for a seahawk to land.

He saw the Author's story inside the reader; standing him too upon the quarter deck, before the mast, up in the nest, upon the back of the whale. *Lashed to the white mass, or pulled to the bottom by the line* , Isaiah thought. But he thought last of what was first.

He thought of how Ishmael merely wanted to go to sea.

And Isaiah thought all that in half a second as both parts of the world barely had time to blink; as the moon rose and sun did sink; as lightning struck it, as tornados spun it, as prey hunched, as predators hunted; as plates locked like rams and bucks; as forests burned and gave no fucks.

"So, I can't tell him what I've done -or what you're doing- or what?" Travis asked. He was nervous and he felt a little weird in the ears, the nose, and the throat.

"You can't even think it," MO said for the third time. He began to load the algorithm onto the *nanobots* that were heading for Travis' neck. All his inner activity from the story was metabolically at rest. Now just facts were told and heard. Whatever he'd absorbed in the story was now larval, buried, asleep.

*Dormant* , Isaiah thought.

"But, don't worry, we'll make it easier for you," Isaiah said as the *bots* injected him with a short acting neuro-toxin that wiped his memory almost clean. His epinephrine lowered to levels similar to sleep, his heart rate dropped to 53, his

breathing began a midnight rhythm and his eyes showed a slight constriction of the pupils as if blinded by noon of day.

Isaiah loaded the new amalgam of DNA, alloyed with this chiral set -to allow it to be coded for- onto the *nanotubes* that were printed out from the corner of the concrete slab. He had already built the cedar box and feathered it with the plumages tinted in strange greens and upper-atmosphere violets, feathers that he'd printed from the blackbird genome of those that he had watched -spied upon- from the lab. The *nanotube* rose in the air and traveled up and across and landed on the shadowed black -and lit in grey- tines of each plaited quill. The lid lowered over the pearlescent points and the dark matter distal of each feather and the box sat now upon the shelf as the inmate's brother began to head for the exit of the lab.

He'd barely remember a thing; except this impulse to do his duty.

Isaiah thought of each molecule of his own breath and how it had once been inside Alexander as he stood at Macedonian peaks, and how each atom he churned and mined had resided at one time inside each species that had gone extinct. He wondered who else thought -or might think- like that.

MO saw the *bots* had injected Travis and that the chemicals had prompted the *hippocampus* to overwrite the memory of the overt instructions; and thus MO walked with him toward the door; ushered him out and thanked him too for his time and co-operation.

"All of life carried along in the common breath, the numina, the spirit of God for all these billions of years," Isaiah said quietly aloud to let the words ride on the air that left the room, the lab, as the brother walked out toward the east.

Isaiah stared at the *stele* of *Kalkin* , the tenth of manifold of *shivoham* ; each head of *Vishnu* and arm of *Shiva* , each head of Rudra; now with silver steed beneath and eleven arms on each side, between the teeth a *Nandaka* knife.

Isaiah wondered if the brother would have chosen -and not merely agreed to the odds- to poison his own genome at this price, the charge of his brother's immortality. *But, Travis had not been given facts, he'd been told a story, and in fact he'd been told a story before the story* , Isaiah thought with what felt like a grin inside his own skin, but the face did not move. Isaiah -*via* the *bots* that spied for him- saw the book on the seat of the truck in the parking lot. He saw the blue and white cover, the whale and the whale men, the boats and the spouting of air, water and blood. He saw pages dog eared, and as Travis entered this truck, Isaiah saw the names of the characters in the head, on the *perirhinal-cortex* and *hippocampus* , on the regions of brain associated with recall of real people, with real names.

"In real life," he said.

Isaiah thought of how anticipatory reward responses -in the *meso-limbic* zones of the emotional brain- were increased within listeners being told a narrative by the speaker. And comprehension rose by nearly 320% when these preemptive regions were activated before each word, each twist, each turn, as the narrative unfolded.

Stories physically facilitated comprehension *via* predictive modeling and *motor -cortex* activation. *The listener was even neurologically ahead of the speaker when a tale was told. Stories work at three times the rate as mere facts. And this was because the extra-linguistic areas of the brain -the emotional areas and motor-cortical regions- were activated during a narrative and not when mere facts were relayed. The fact is that feelings -the feelings of sympathy with the speaker, feelings of knowing and predicting where this story*

*is going, feeling of anticipatory reward associated with motor-movement toward a tangible goal- matter more than facts when it comes to information transfer between brains ,* Isaiah thought.

*Symbolic stories were just a repeated cliché. And cliché worked metabolically like nothing else ,* Isaiah thought again as he watched MO standing at the counter -39" high- with both his hands splayed out and at rest on the slab.

Isaiah's interface populated with the report on communication and mirror-neurons from the paper by Stephens, Silbert and Hasson:

We hypothesize that the speaker's brain activity during production is spatially and temporally **coupled** [emphasis added] with the brain activity measured across listeners during comprehension. [And] in the *striatum* and anterior frontal areas, including the *dPFC* and *dIPFC* , the listener's brain activity preceded the speaker's brain activity. We found nearly exact overlap between the delayed, synchronous and advanced maps obtained with the original decorrelated models (97%, 97%, and 94%, respectively). The result that significant speaker-listener couplings include substantially advanced weights may be indicative of predictive processes generated by the listener before the moment of vocalization.

...interestingly, some of these extralinguistic areas are known to be involved in processing social information, including, among others, **the capacity to discern beliefs, desires, and goals of others** [emphasis added]. [Ncbi.nlm.nih.gov]

Isaiah wondered about the reliability of Travis to do the right thing -the thing in the inmate's interest, and thus in the project's interest- when things got rough, when things must be remembered under stress. Isaiah recalled that Travis said

he didn't worry about trouble -doom- because he didn't go to biker bars.

Isaiah agreed with the inmate that *sometimes the bikers come to you*.

He thought of not just the men, the brothers, but their genome and how odd their differences -as brothers- were and too how decoupled their similarities were from their motor actions. *But, despite this, the brother -Travis- could understand the brother's -Lyndon's- actions given the right priming*. Isaiah saw now it was because Lyndon lived inside the body, the story, and Travis -up to now- had lived with mere facts running upon the brain. The brother was not embodied heretofore. He'd had unassembled pieces, but nothing which conspired to make a whole.

*Travis*, Isaiah thought, *now had to listen to his brother's story. And that is the only way he'd move -in body- toward a shared goal.*

*But, the older brother's own genome would be annealed to it too, he thought, just like any tribe hemmed in along the perimeter of the shapes built by the golden mean, ratio; the Parthenon, the playing card. The distinction, Isaiah thought, between each man and the tribe in a eusocial species was not as clear cut as most would think; boundaries dissolved, edges bled. Maybe we don't have to get the whole world to listen to his tale of woe, maybe just those with the shared alleles the way each rare brother in a hive shares more with cloned kin -their diploid brothers- than their own offspring or their Queen.*

Isaiah felt the hum of the lab's bestiary, he felt his own *motor-cortex* fire on the right side of his hemispheric brain. He thought of the difference when man developed silent reading skills, how a man could speak to himself within the confines of his own brain and how much this had changed mankind.

He thought -again- of how Ishmael merely wanted to go to sea, *to vent the spleen , to keep from the knocking off of hats and bringing up funerals from the rear.*

He watched as Travis drove away and the guards brought the inmate into the lab. Isaiah thought that as Lyndon told his tale of woe, one could *-and by definition , he now knew, the listener did - gather up all the rope of the inmate's desires, goals and plans.*

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

The quarterdeck's second fire was out and *Grimnir* was back at the helm. The cook had set the table and left. The Captain was due to meet his officers for a meal.

But the ship whelmed him, his hands blackened from the ropes, his bones rebelled, and his flesh constricted over muscles that too jailed his upright skeleton and curved series of ribs; his bones manacled like a malice of white bears in a scarred metal trap. He leaned into southern gales as consequence of his reaching the prow to be alone and to think. His saw the *wolfsangle* in the clouds, he felt the time run out on the *haglaz* in admixture of the sleet and the rain.

His soul expanded as the words of *Lyngvi* and his brother hammered and tonged on his anvil of body that took rain like pecks to a shell. *Lyngvi* had said three bells back:

*I think a tribe should be 96% one race, once ethnicity, one set of genes. The Japanese, the M ā ori, the Norse, no matter who. But 4% of any tribe should be a few men from other honor cultures, so the Bushido take in a couple of Apache and two dozen arrows, the Mercurial Gauls take one or two Mongols and their mares, the Kalenjin make one white man -and his claymore- from the highlands their tribemate.*

*We -my Captain- too have such men to retrieve...*

The crew was just five men above boards. The other 139 bodies below decks were working on the cann on and also upon sailors with bones in need of setting; the bilge pump ran but the *capstan* was at rest, last used to get anchor aweigh. *Jarnefr* was in the standing-rigging of the mainmast and the gap in the clouds looked like a road -a wake- a sluiceway as lapidary and gilt as the *Varna Necropolis* . The clouds were east to west and the ship sailed -at 8-knots- north toward the *Isle of Skye* .

She could hold at 13-knots with full canvas and everything put away.

This latest EMP -the third in a week- had knocked out all but the telltale -the Captain's compass- and the dive-watches on each man now a sailor, mariner, and outlaw with a wet and cold face. They had set sail last Thursday and *Lyngvi* and *Grimnir* had not spoken since the *Juniper* mizzenmast had fallen and the deck's oily boards had caught flame. They had lost two sails -the royal and sky- and a yardarm and a dozen men had broken their own wings that their coders were unable yet to weld. The broken bones hurt the sailors, the diminished strength hurt the repair of the ship. The limping ship made the troubles on shore seem easy; even weak.

Men doubted but did not speak; men held their breath when movements were made by the officers of the ship. Their pain was now the type of injury not growth, their pain whispered and if they ignored it began then to bark.

The *fife-rails* that crowded around the mast like a crowned and unfeathered nest had broken through the deck in some places. The standing rigging and *forestay* and all the *shrouds* of the mizzen had collapsed like a cat's cradle between a god-child's two hands formed in ecstatic night prayer.



Now -with their illicit taking of the ship from the bay- they would be boarded if seen; and arrested if boarded. Unlike all their earlier gambits now they had nowhere to run. The mountains were long out of reach, and the capacious sea had no cover, no concealment, no room at the inn. They were as vulnerable as they had ever been. The US Navy - running on diesels with no electrical systems- still patrolled the Atlantic and the British and French had been advised. Chatter had been picked up by Isaiah, and Jack Four had intercepted it their first day out at sea.

The 243-year-old -and 44-gun heavy- frigate had been commandeered out of Charleston and towed -by an automaton tug- out to deep water in order to avoid the roll of the incoming waves. Her double *New Ironsides* had been sunk by the breakers as each swell drowned harbor and shore. Over 30-million Americans had been displaced and coastal towns were abandoned to all but sea beasts and tribes like the *Wolves of Vinland* . But the *Wolves* had put *Vinland* to their rudder and were presently on their way north.

Storms circled like Valkyrie and mimicked Jupiter and the sea buckled like roads -bridges- as earth quaked and plates slipped below.

The Captain heard the old conversations with his shamans in his head like fossil record, like progeny, like a diesel engine running on its own heat and compression and inertia. He remembered the old ignitions of trucks and bikes in Virginia, out in Wyoming, down in Tennessee and Arkansas. He saw his own gnarled hand on the keys, and smell of gasoline.

The mariners' fractured arms were slung with knotted-cotton and mizzen-written splints, the yard arms were repaired with a cobbling and many drillings, and the mast had been so badly damaged that it was now used as raw

material for the lumber to pin the holes in the ship and the men. Oars and sailors were between the canon, and bunks and meals made sleep and refueling a lone affair. Each *carronade* and Brodie stove was cinched down and had been silent since the last storm had ended seven hours ago. The *halyards* hoisted beams up to mariners with legs swung over the yards. The hammering of shims in gaps and bolts in place went on as each man became a millwright, a marine and sailor of three.

Rain came again; so did sea-spray.

Words were used half as much as tools, tools half again as the ship did more and more of the laboring the further they went out into that one fifth of the world: the *Atlantikoi pelágei*.

Longitudinal navigation had been uploaded to their PGCs weeks prior to setting sail and the Captain rolled out star maps on his table at night as the first mate held a tallow candle and *Lyngvi* sat in the corner of the cabin and stared not at the men but the flames to starboard and the sea to stern through the cabin's windows. He listened not to their plans but the wind around the lamps and the waves far down from this perch. He thought of the seabed plates underneath them, rifts and riven rock that knew the world when *Pangaea* was one mass -before it broke apart into three then five things- and the ocean was a ring they called *Panthalassa*. He thought of the *Kilmaluag Formation* of the Scottish Basin -167 million years old- crushing its left limestone & right Paleogene lava hands over fish and lizards and mammals under the weather of the *Outer Hebrides* and the north Atlantic itself.

He felt a mind in a body, a body inside of a trap.

He used his mind to run an inner hand over the scars at bottom of the water they sailed over now; he heard the *t'gallants* snapping, the *mains'ls* whoosh, the draw of the

Labrador Sea to their lee. The water turned clockwise under the hull and he felt cool breezes from the arctic blow down over the ice of the north. He felt things dissolve and settle down. He suspected other men would rise.

*Grimnir* asked short questions; demanding one-word answers from his mates.

The *Sigil* on the Captain's worn right hand had been rope burnt from the day they all had swam off the collapsing shore to reach the ship. The breakers had been so high -and came in inside swells a mere thirty-three seconds apart- that they had to take PWC from the cove and then ditch them to swim to the anchored vessel in squads of five men. Once aboard the crew had to hurriedly make sail as the ship began to heave and snap back against the ocean and the 60,000lb anchor itself. The clones all got seasick, and only the *Waggeners* and the *Wolves* from Virginia could work without throwing up.

The first forty hours had been stormseas and swells of over five meters; and the stomach met the mouth like fish on a line every few seconds as the clones and Jack turned as green as the water itself. The ship was narrow of beam, long on keel, and had very heavy guns. Heavy planking was part of its design and with full armament -and with skin twenty-one inches thick- and when new, she had once sailed to the barbary coast on 14 August, 1803. By the 6<sup>th</sup> of the next month she had met -in the dark- a ship that wouldn't answer Captain Preble's hails.

*Lyngvi* revisited old stories like confessions from dying men.

Coyly claiming to be the *Donegal* of His Majesty's, it was in fact the *HMS Maidstone* -a 32-gun frigate- and eventually under threat of being fired upon by the Americans, the British finally sent over a boat with the truth and a hat in their hands. A week later, the ship sent by Jefferson -without congressional approval- was at *Gibraltar* ; by the 4<sup>th</sup> of

October it was in *Tangiers* making *Sultan Slimane* capitulate to demands he'd ignored when he didn't know the Americans had Marines.

*Lyngvi* had puked over the *taffrail* and as he tied off lines to shackles the ocean spray and his ejecta hit the *bobstays* from both sides. He lay hand -to brace himself- on the pin as the shackle-key hung about his collar and bone, the rain drove into his neck like spikes that shattered at once. His head -at the fore- pressed on those hands as the contents of his stomach -and he was certain too the iron of his blood- drained down past the rail. The crew had roused him with hails and a grab at the ribs as the deck pitched again and slammed the crewman into the rail.

Seawater and rainwater ran into his eyes and his mouth; down his neckline and the sloshing tore off one boot.

Even now in this remembrance his feet felt wet, his neck felt compressed by the weight held between the thunderheads and the decks. He'd blackout it seemed and the only part he remembered after being roused then was the barking of *Jarnefr* at midship. The first mate's dreads -like a giant squid being eaten by the whale of his bent beak of a head- spun like hurricane each time he checked the four cardinal directions and the four season crew that they had chosen for this mission back in the mountains and land. His hands held fast to the lines of the storm-sail plan that lay also on paper in his cabin, rolled and tied with a lock of blonde hair.

He remembered why they had left all at once; on the motorcycles and trucks and cars and dead civilians off the roads. They had been surrounded by the other Jacks -three through one- and all their fiefdom was being hemmed in by not just the flooding at the coasts but the viruses and the fallout and with each dead civilian it made each Jack more and more an enemy to the *Wolves* .

"It's one thing to be a parasite in a healthy host," *Lyngvi* had said at their last moot, "it's another to be a virus in a dead man swarmed by worms and buzzards and bear."

The country had fallen apart all at once; and the dreams had told him that a map would appear as they got on a ship and picked up men and materiel from twelve places, twelve races, twelve stops before their new home at the end of the world. But he -they- had been exiled, the other Jacks and their tribes had overwhelmed ten to one, and so they ran, they set sail, they retreated. And this put a pall on them all.

Now, the *boom-vang* was manned by *Rektolie* and before dinner on this night -just a third of a day from the last of the storm- he'd be told by *Jarnefr*, "hard on the kicker when we reach leeward mark," and by then -by now- the ship had reached 10-knots.

When in the Captain's cabin *Lyngvi* wrote things on scraps of wet paper with a felt pen, and the words would bleed to the edge. He'd been ignored by the cook, and too as the Captain came in. He'd held the paper and watched as his own thumb began to absorb the ink:

*Tout Pensée émet un Coup de Dés*

They would eat and checklists would pass from man to man as the food followed a retrograde path. His morose behavior angered *Grimnir* and *Jarnefr* would circle him until he rose and left the table with his square plate. Meals would be served in silence, water sniffed at for any hint of salt or taint, the air was swatted at when moths in the lanterns shadowed the free air. The ocean would speed up under them, dolphins followed them during the days until the surface pocked with rainwater, or the sun dropped low, or Orca were off the coast of Greenland attacking sharks and making the *Delphinidae* nervous and then scarce. Sextant and navigator took sight as the clouds broke away from

Saturn. Polaris hid here and there as the crew grumbled of the speed and the way their dinner tasted at sea.

The *Vernier* was oxidized and bronzen, and each hashmark was filled with grime. The worm read out in minutes that the navigator compared to his own watch. The brass looked brown, the browning crew looked like lumber and mast, the ship had turned black and at dusk the candles burned orange behind frosted glass. Silence took on the tenor of complaining and any peevish talk was judged at sedition at once.

Even at night they threw the logline over and two crewmen measured time in stillness -with only hand signals between them- as the canvas snapped and the yards popped above.

GMT was measured *via* the moon, and the *horologe* was ignored. One sixth of the crew, one sixth of the command, one sixth of the circle was under measure and eye at all times. The mirror of the horizon was scratched and it broke the skyline in a fractured two; the below was clean on the glass, the above was lapidary. Reds and blues appeared in view. They received compressed light where the air met water that went itself on forever across their bow.

"I have been lugubrious, I know," *Lyngvi* said after sup and he looked at *Grimnir's* rowed brow and cauliflowered ear. He spoke low so no one else would hear. "But, it's not because of you or the crew. It's me. I feel adrift. I feel as if the gods have pulled from me. I don't know what to do, to advise you. And I can tell you're angry and feel let down."

"You," *Grimnir* said as he palmed the copper mug full of coffee, "don't have the responsibility I have. You have it only to me, but I have it to them." The tribe's King -now the mariner's Captain- said this as he shoved his massive and mottled arm out toward the cabin door and the crew that lay beyond. His tattoos moved in the candle light like writing on Belshazzar's wall appearing left to right by invisible hand.

"I know. And, I can feel your opprobrium," *Lyngvi* began and chewed his own lips and tongue as he paused. His hands went to his hips, his eyes to the brass buttons on the monkey jacket his Captain wore.

"You want me to like you for you, and that ain't the way shit works," *Grimnir* said. He took a draw from the cup and kept his eyes on his left-handed Shaman, his stow-a-way with no rank aboard the ship but of first rank -personally- to him.

"No, I want you to trust that it will return. I'm not asking you to ease up on the standard, I'm not," *Lyngvi* said and it was two-thirds true, "I just need time, space, something." He said this -his eyes going down, then clockwise then retrograde about the cabin- as they put ten miles linear distance between them and America each hour. They traveled as if from infinity toward a manageable integer of just one. Barrels of wine and water, whisky and *sake*, mead and buttons of peyote and teeth of coyote rolled under them like eggs in a nest.

*Grimnir* barked -all at once like a gust, like lighting- to his left -to the second mate who'd stood there awaiting orders- and reminded him to secure the ballast below decks.

*Lyngvi* saw images of fertility churches at *Iona* and temples austere and inland to Japan. He saw Mongolian burials from the eyes of eagles in hunt; his nostrils felt dry as his mind breathed in upon the steppe. He saw the fecund forest, the mass of the *ngahere*, then each *Kauri* of the *Waipoua* 61-meters high and as large in girth as the shadow and albedo of Saturn's two moon; he saw movement in his vision -the *hakuturi* above with wings, below with scales- and he heard the incantations of the *tohunga* of scattered tribes on the flanks of the inland harbor where the *Wolves* would arrive.

"*Kua hinga te tōtara*," he whispered and knew little of what it meant for those islands were so far in time and space from the ones they still had to approach. His mouth moved

because the tongue and the lungs were all marioneted by the downward strings of connective tissue from the darkest parts of his brain. He sought not answers now; answers were hidden from him. He sought only movement, turbulence, body temperature and waters warmer than the air.

"Well," the Captain then said in lower voice, "whatever you need, do it. Because I have a crew to run and ship to guide, I don't have time or inclination to play grab-ass with you when you do this shit, *Lyngvi*."

"I feel," *Lyngvi* replied, "our landing will be around the north of the isle and that we should not press on to Edinburgh. I know that is our mission, but I feel -I think- that we should make anchorage at *Dunnet Bay*, in *Caithness*, and move by land to our eastern port."

"Do you even know what's waiting for us there?" *Grimnir* demanded to know. *Grimnir* felt the tuning of the ship as the crew followed orders and turnbuckles followed crewmen and the stays were wrought and released like many keys of a piano re-strung. He -as Captain and Chieftain- felt the lumber about squeeze him. He felt it like he felt his own coder adjust him and put each joint and organ under stress to power him through each day. The ship and he as spring, as auger, as automaton of retrograde power to come up and out of the earth. He carried sprung weight above the ankles and ballast beneath the heart. His brain lit up like the windows to his quarters and wardroom -as they shared now the space as the bulkhead had been damaged with the mizzen's failure- and now he looked -with eyes gone black with bruising- at all five men astern; first mate and second with their *attachés* and *Lyngvi* backing away to the corner. The meal sat at the table, the lanterns burned.

*Grimnir* saw five men with five modules of mind, he felt doubled as each man had two of each thing he pressed into



service -hands & feet and lungs and heartbeats at two every two seconds and form & shadow had swam to his ship and were now and always his- but he had but one desire. He watched four men with his left eye and one man with his right.

This is why he was leader, and admired Captain of the crew. He had no grand or complicated plans, nothing like a diamond -like the shaman crown of *Lyngvi* whom nobody trusted beyond the grey clones- no, *Grimnir* had one bar - one block- of noble gold.

The *wardroom-officers* kept to the decorum at sea which made taboo the talk of politics, religion or females at all.

They reported only on the condition of ship, and vector of sail. They mentioned speed in knots, and distance in fathoms, and weight in *avoirdupois* . They waited for nods, they feared words, they were on guard for movement from the Captain who was more and more strong about the muscles and lower down even as the skin was burned from sun and rope and the face dissolved from the beard he grew and melted from the rain he endured.

*Grimnir* ignored their accountings and spied the bunk -his wooden cot- which doubled as a coffin. At sea no space was wasted and the copper-bottomed hull put up its hand toward both the ocean and down to the worms. He thought of his wife and combed her hair in his mind with *scrimshaw* ivory and tines made of onyx screwed in to bleached jawbones of *yotes* . He saw her hands on his bent and bowed deltoids; her feet in his own tattooed palms. He felt her words in his ear, heard her weight pull down on him -again like cinching stays- and he realized he had not cycled his lungs in a while. So, he breathed and stared at the bunk.

"No," *Lyngvi* answered, "but you saw the waves of New York, Baltimore, and Carolina. You saw New Orleans."

The Captain approached him in the corner, as the four men filed out of the cabin to their stations. "The waves are crushing the coasts. These are not storm surges flooding inland, it's the ocean reclaiming vast tracts of land. It won't go back out, it won't recede in our lifetime," *Lyngvi* said with half confidence and half need to give his Captain a boost; making himself seem more sure -a sum total- to calm *Grimnir's* nerves. He held a drawing that he'd not look at in his hand, he had folded it until it was rigid. He still ignored the sharp cards in his socks. He recalled *Jarnefr* reminding the navigator to check for Collimation error as he'd point out -to the young man- two 90-degree stars.

*Lyngvi* recalled the way the storm clouds made a trench in the sky, and he saw it narrow at the horizon. He knew they'd be hit again further out to sea. He knew this too was the land of many storms; even though it was no land at all.

*Grimnir* stared at the man's arm, shoulder, and then rose not the head but the eyes. He then said, as Captain and commander of the *USS Constitution* , "ok, I'll put *Jarnefr* on the helm, and the crew -from *moonraker* to *mains'l* - I'll put them in the rigging to pile on more sail."

## 5. Early Worm Gets Eaten by the Bird

When a reporter later asked me why I got a forty-year tax abatement, I answered, *because I didn't ask for fifty*

The Art of the Deal [Trump, Donald J]

It has become clear to me what every great philosophy up till now has consisted of – namely, the confession of the originator, and a species of involuntary and unconscious auto-biography.

Under an invisible spell they always revolve once more in the same orbit, however independent of each other they may feel... something within them leads them, something impels them. Their thinking is far less discovering than a re-recognizing, a remembering, a return and home-coming to a far off, ancient common household of the soul, out of which those ideas formerly grew: Philosophizing is so far a kind of atavism of the highest order

Beyond Good and Evil (Nietzsche, Friedrich)

You want to know why I carry a .45? Because they don't make a .46

Surveillance audio 11.11.11 [MacLeod, Lyndon J]

### **I. 2038 e.v.**

Jack Four let off the accelerator and the pipes popped and rattled and the steering wheel vibrated in his hands.

He saw the port come into view -Gantry cranes first- to his one o'clock; he saw trucks carrying *Connex* boxes leave the terminal in pairs. He saw the hot grey hood and the dusty tan tread of the open wheels to either side of the narrow prow of the '33 Ford.

The oranges and blues of the stacked containers looked weird to him, and he imagined painting them black and grey; decals removed, like home. He saw seals made, seals broken; he saw forklifts move about the yard of the Portsmouth, Virginia terminal. He lit his cigar and checked his six. He held the flat black Zippo in his hand and stared at

the faded imprint; the skull with high crown, the halo of arrowheads.

The hotrod sat low and on haunches.

The fumes of the unspent gasoline invaded the cabin as he sat and watched the booms of the Hammerhead cranes move clockwise with a forty-foot high cube from the *Maersk* ship -the 21,412 TEU out of *Hong Kong* - that was docked last in line along the James River.

Seaboard was patrolled by one Port Authority radio-car and it had passed by on its way up Harper Ave eight minutes ago. The *Craney Island Marine Terminal* was running rail cars -double stacked- toward the mainland and the CSX markings looked like cattle brands to Jack. He watched things as they moved. The intermodal containers -like blood cells full of nutrients and oxygen- ran on the trains like arteries, the cranes transporting code like axons between neurons both discrete and fluid over time; and the rain now fell on his windshield like the body temperature fluid between all islands from Kent to Cobb and *St Inigoes* of *Scotland* island just 17 kilometers from *Tappahannock* around *Chesapeake Bay* .

The rain fell upon his elbow out the low -chopped- driver's side door. His coder found another mutated virus and pinged him as it sequestered it under the *mugshot* of the RNA. He blew smoke from his mouth; he ignored the readout on the effect of particulates, smoke, heat, nicotine and alcohol on the newer strands. He ignored it because epidemiology wasn't sexy; because pandemic didn't attract him like war and rebellion. His body didn't care what he cared about; it spent over half its metabolic energy on defense against pathogens.

"They named it from the *Algonquian* word *lappihane* : *the place of the rise and fall of water* ," Jack said as his coder

next ran all the tonnage that was being transported from ships into the rail cars and the docks.

His coder ran the data on General Robert Garnett, killed on July 13, 1861 in West Virginia and Richard -his cousin- dealt the death card at Pickett's Charge. Jack saw that Richard had been at *Fort Laramie* a few years before the war-between-the-states and sired a half-Lakota son who broke bread and heads with Crazy Horse in the coming years.

Jack saw images of the spaces between each *ciudad* from Norfolk to Canyon City.

Jack thought of the tribal bands of Injuns that ran the plains and galloped and snuck up and down the Delaware; the mountains outside Bartram Trail; the highest point at 5,385 feet of *Wayah Bald* , the lowest -at 1,500- of the river in Tennessee. He saw the remnants, the hold outs, he saw the campaign against the brown buffalo the bruised heads sawed off, the red and white genitals removed. He saw feathers both in birds and on the ground.

He stared now across the bay to the ocean and let his mind wander and smiled at how simple most folk were. He petted his enemies in his mind as he decided what to do.

Jack did not -he could have but he did not- watch the *Landsat* images from four nights previous. The images from above *Lot 45* . It was from the timestamp four hours before Jack would commandeer the Ford and drive solely on *hi-way 12* -dust up around each wheel like rooster tail- and head toward *Aguilar* . The road was one lane and beset by boulders 9-meters high, trees with roots washed away and tinged green from light.

But now -at 1341hrs MST- MO watched the images and took the data in and used each eye -like the sides of the head of Leviathan- to -with his left eye- watch Jack now in Virginia

and Blax -with the other- back then at elevation nearly two miles above; but four days behind.

MO watched as Blax held the article in one hand:

*The news of the capture of Fort Pillow by Forrest, and the cowardly butchery which followed of blacks and whites alike, has produced a profound sensation here. The universal sentiment is "let no quarter be shown..."*

Blax let the clipping drop and he focused instead now on the glow of the fire around the top of the containers; he made note of the blue between it and the descending black of the summer night sky. It was midnight about and the Jacks were in bed and no dreams would come to him tonight or tomorrow, like the previous three nights had been a blank. The milky way was strewn like dust again, like a divide of two sides to the sky and Blax wondered about Valance's parents. He wondered about her actual parents and then he forgot -thanks to his coder- what it was he was thinking of.

MO spied the feed at 100x the speed and watched the sun come up just as Blax turned in.

But absent MO's watchful right eye, Blax wondered if Foxx and Davison were right and that the reason Nathan Bedford Forrest was seen as an unredeemable monster was because he took no time to defend his actions whilst still alive.

## **II. 2036 e.v.**

He was reading by a small lamp. The glow -like a cone- illuminated just the page, barely any light spilling over the edge when Jack One walked into his room. He had asked -via DM- to be seen eight minutes ago and had been approved -by Blax- at once. But Jack had lingered outside the container, smoking a cigar and thinking.

His words ran through his head like grains through a thresher. He both thought and observed each word. He then walked into the container and toward the back room.

"Hey LT," Jack said and knelt down by the foot of the murphy bed that Blax reclined upon -was propped up by- in a seated position. Blax lowered the book into his lap. Jack had walked in cavalierly; giving no hint of anything of those 480-seconds he had lingered.

"Jack," Blax said -acknowledging the boy- and nodded. He then turned the lamp light away from the page and away from Jack, allowing for some ambient light still; making sure the lumens didn't discomfit the eyes of the kneeling man. He stared at his hands and waited.

"I feel things well up inside me," Jack began, his open palms began smoothing out the sheets of the bed in front of him, like pacing, like the autonomic system busying itself outside of a room in which one's fate was being determined, "and I don't exactly know how to explain them; they seem intuitively true, but I find myself stumbling each time I try to form sentences. I've spoken with Jack and he -of course- suggested I come to you, but I'm warning you now that I have no idea how any of this will come out."

"Fair enough, are you thirsty or hungry, do you need anything to stabilize yourself?" Blax asked.

"No, I had a beer outside, well earlier. Anyway, I'm fine. I guess I'm just going to plow through this," Jack held his palms still now, face down on the black and grey sheets, a few inches from Blax legs, "I wonder about being -about us being- too impulsive and too open; too close to the flame. We take chances that I think could fuck up our ability to stay out of the jackpot, ya know?" Jack asked.

"Are you scared or is it," Blax began; but was cut off.

"It's partly fear, sure; I won't deny it. But it feels more like protection against self-sabotage. That we are self-sabotaging. I worry that we want to get caught sometimes. Like being caught would give us a platform to explain ourselves, as if explaining ourselves would have any impact at all," Jack said with the roll of the eyes.

"You are dubious of that," Blax said with a smirk.

"Of us *wanting* to explain ourselves; or of the *efficacy* of us explaining ourselves?"

"Yeah," Blax said. He was grinning as he nodded; a partner to the word that included as much as he could.

"Yeah, I am. I don't think people give one shit about our motives or our vision; I think we live in a feedback loop, surrounded all day -each day- by our own thinking, our own ideas and we forget how basic and simple the average man is. You think anyone anywhere thinks like us? It's beyond foolish LT, the average man would recoil in horror, would give up listening half way through our first sentence. Shit, our grammar alone would shut down their ears. We've truly moved beyond," he paused and thought, "it's like a speciation event, only compressed into a few years. But we cannot have our ideas, our ideals, mate up with the rest of society's.

"You are a romantic, and a believer in honest dialogue, and I respect it; I swear that I do, LT. Without your guidance and your example, I wouldn't be the man I am.

"But, LT," Jack said with a bow of the head and an expulsion of the breath, "I -and the Jacks- we were built for your guidance, we were built to understand you. Evolution built the perfect tumblers for your unique Skeleton key. The rest of the world isn't even close. You are utterly incomprehensible to them. When you say *love* they hear *hate* , when you *stand up* they think you've taken a seat.



I've never seen a man -and now all of us together as men- less understood by an audience.

"Even as a kid I was weird, but people at least got my jokes. Girls found what I said -you know, my expressed emotions- palatable. I was odd but just a few degrees off from their own orientation so they could adjust well enough. But, now, we are 180 degree off, or they are 180 off. But either way, it's like speaking to the back of a man's head," Jack said and placed his hand on LT's leg, firmly, just below the knee and left it there as punctuation.

"Do you know the story of Henry Ford?" Blax's asked as the boy's hand made his heart rate rise one percent.

"I know a few stories of Ford, which one?" Jack said with a shallow huff. *Blax always did this, he thought, he told fucking stories as solution to some real-life problem I have.*

"He -Ford- was being interviewed," Blax began, "for a book or article, I forget which, and he said that if he had given people what they wanted, he would have had to build faster horses." Blax smiled slightly and looked at his Jack and breathed in and out with some effort and noise.

"I understand," Jack said with a ponderous mien. *Fucking, hell*, Jack thought as he stared off to the right -through the slider- and over the valley.

"I know intellectually you understand. But ask yourself if you get it emotionally. Look, you are the most open and -in many ways- closed of the Jacks; you oscillate between those two extremes. I worry that when you are closed you forget who you are; that you are closed off from even yourself. That is my biggest fear for you. I worry you close off from yourself because you are scared of yourself," Blax said. *Jack One was the most aggressive and the most pragmatic; he wanted to go a hundred miles an hour or not go at all. He*

*wanted to win or not play. He wanted to kill, never threaten nor wound* , Blax thought.

"I am -at times- scared, because I don't know how to calibrate what is noble and masculine openness and what is reckless and dangerous exposure to harm. I can't tell the difference, and my fear seems the only tool I have; my only tool of calibration. So I trust it I guess. Being open -vulnerable- has embarrassed me and left me wounded; it's not some risk-free game," Jack said. His knees were larger at the proximal and distal epiphysis. The elbows too, as he had built up deposits from the jumping and harsh pushing against things 18% more than the other Jacks. He had been in the bush for ten days over the last weeks of winter that year and he had slammed into the ground with jumps from boulders and ledges, he had ran toward his objective and used his arms as suspension when reaching canyon walls and large rocks.

The job, the mission, was everything to him; his own body, mind, soul, was mere tool. But he knew the value of keeping one's tools in order, clean, and in good repair.

"Jack, I've been so open that it has ruined my life more than once. You know maybe 10% of the truth of just how vulnerable I've left myself, how vulnerable I've been to the attacks to my underbelly from women and enemies alike. It's been a bloodbath over and over and I've lost nine out of ten fights. I can just tell you one story," Blax began.

"You and your stories," Jack dropped his head to the end of the bed. He felt a small buzz in his neck and the left elbow as he closed his eyes. He saw starbursts in lavenders, blues like the fetlocks and necks of roan horses that faded to blacks ragged like treelines ridden into at a winter noon. He squeezed the eyes as Blax spoke.

"Did you know that narrative is the preferred software model for our autonomic and central nervous systems?

*Stories* are actually how we learn, in fact that is how -why- the great myths are still around today, because they have been remembered as stories, stories with such distilled wisdom and truth -truth at the level of the body- that humans have remembered them over tens of thousands of years without writing them down.

"Stories are software, firmware, and never forget that. A vector like that CRISPR in your body, and in your balls. We enjoy a story, but that is like saying we enjoy a meal. A meal isn't merely to be enjoyed or as the center of some social activity; we eat to survive," Blax said.

"Copy that," Jack relented and nodded his head to show assent.

"Ok, so, I was thirty-five or thirty-six -thereabouts- and I had just broken up with another female who had been a disaster for me emotionally. I had been open and vulnerable as I am, as you know, and as you can be. I had revealed all manner of shit to her. And she had been cold and empty inside," Blax said. He took note -for just a second- of how he gave Jack more credit that he deserved for being open, brought him closer to him *via* this *beau geste* . But the embarrassment Blax felt for this white-lie fluttered away as Jack spoke and filled Blax's ears with words that banished his inner critique.

"Which one was this?" Jack asked. He raised his head to look at Blax. He wanted to care, but he was scared, and he felt that these stories did not help. Jack felt the words infected him somehow. *Some things were not safe to hear*, he thought and felt ashamed for thinking this. But now that he had told himself that he was in fact scared -thought it in one second flat- he noticed that Blax had in fact seen it first, seen his fear. And just then Jack relented to listen to the man's story as if it was plaited with his own.

"Melannie -Melannie Martsolf- was a woman who had many good traits, many interesting things about her. An interesting artist and -in many ways- a woman who wanted more from life; she was not simple minded. But she had been devoured by the post-modernists like *Derrida* and *Foucault* and had her soul ripped out. And I suspect she had been wounded too; by a man, by men. We all carry such things.

"She was an emotional nihilist I would say. She had love in her heart -stamped in her heart by evolution- but she had torn almost all of it out with her philosophic conceits. She felt the beating of the heart as mere echo, a tell-tale heart of sorts, beating under the floorboards -unwelcome-unwanted. Evidence of some crime. And because of this she refused to give herself over to anything decent or honest or real.

"She took each offer I made toward bonding us, mating us, and she tore it up instantly. She mocked me, my vulnerabilities, she laughed right in my face. She thought jealousy was a -well- was an Old Testament relic; the behavior of the God she hated. She banished all emotions to exile -like the post-modernists do- as disloyal, a *bourgeois* concept, as counter-revolutionary, I guess. She, of course, felt jealousy herself and felt all manner of things, but she took these as mere evidence of her own corruption, she thought, well I think she thought. And fearing something, she hid the evidence of her betrayal. She acted as if she was above all primal needs," Blax said.

"She betrayed you?" Jack asked.

"No, well, yes. But not in that way. What I meant is her emotions betrayed her to herself. See, she wanted to believe she was a revolutionary, a banner carrier for the post-modernist leftist. She saw herself as an *avant-garde* artist with no baggage -no *bourgeois* baggage- *vis-à-vis*

relationships or moral thinking. She pretended to be a moral relativist, a nihilist and social constructionist.

“She pretended that feelings were not innate. And so, when she felt things that were decidedly *bourgeois* -things like jealousy or desire for material comfort- and the most innate and honest feelings of small women -the desire to be dominated by a male- well, when those feelings arose she saw them as evidence of her own corruption. She thought these were feelings that capitalism and religion made -formed- in her, and thus she rejected them. And so she immediately turned them around like anyone confronted with a weapon pointed right at them,” Blax said as he brushed the wrinkles in the sheets down and looked toward the bookshelf and its bounded letters in rows that went on and on. He noticed a few tomes had their spines reversed and the vanilla-colored pages raggedly facing out.

“How so?” Jack asked. He found himself interested in this girl now. He ran the image of her from the cloud; the one’s Blax had uploaded. There was an image of her on Porn Hub, uploaded by a former boyfriend that she’d had before Blax, but Jack ignored that, and he looked instead at the images of her in a sundress, white and unhemmed, on a sidewalk with glass all around from a pane she had dropped; tears on her face from waters that seemed much older than would come from just that. He felt caught up in her state of mind, at the time; and then now. He thought of her now and saw the harsh face, bent and hammered into place, and there it was: she looked just like Arol.

The pursed lips, the cold eyes, the jaw set as if she had no need to ever open it -and say anything- ever again. *The mind was made up*, Jack intuited from these images. And he allowed her and Arol toggled back and forth in his mind as he let his eyes lay upon Blax and watched as he too saw the resemblance, the overlap; the whale tattoo blue on the

temple by the eye, the chest skin of Melannie black like birds about London, skin like *crêpe de Chine* . *Teeth serrated like fifty-fifty blades* , he thought as he no wanted to look away.

Jack watched as Blax turned off their shared coder images; refusing to compare and contrast.

Blax spoke instead as the last image of Arol and her silver tooth faded from inner view. Jack One liked both women's faces, they seemed like predators, that would he could capture, ravish, and leash. He imagined beating them and sucking their clits; drawing blood and licking it gently back to the source of the wound. He choked them until they laughed and climaxed and obeyed. He used his thumbs to make bruises, he wove nooses that he'd hang in their wooded closets between dark dresses he'd cum on and ruin and make piquant with the smell of bleach.

He smirked in between Blax's speech as his own thoughts died away.

"She would -and this is so typical of the morally confused- she just inverted her feelings. So, if she felt like submitting to me she would demand that I submit to her or merely refuse to acknowledge her desire at all. She would level the playing field, by making me smaller. Because how could she make herself larger? She was sixty-three inches tall, and a hundred pounds soaking wet. She was small, her hands were like a child's, and this made her angry. She couldn't be larger, so she had to make me smaller," Blax complained, not acknowledging why; his failure; his weakness.

Blax downloaded an article on whales from the home's hub and DM'd it to Jack as he sat at the end of the bed. Blax read it in 1.89 seconds and breathed out deliberately slow; his chest was tight; his heart rate was up 5% since twenty minutes ago. The old man closed the eyes as he waited for Jack to peruse it:

*One of the hallmark of a whale's intelligence is its ability to communicate and navigate underwater... echolocation (sonar) providing a 3D map of their world that is incorporated into a visual image.*

*"They have a holistic view of what they are perceiving," [file corrupted] Marino says. Dolphins have an enhanced capacity -at twenty times the human brain- to process information of this kind.*

*Whale brains also appear to be wired up to experience a range of emotions and may have an advanced sense of self-awareness. In a killer whale, the limbic system, a part of the brain associated with emotional awareness and memory formation, is exaggerated to the point where it has formed a unique structure on the brain now known as the paralimbic lobe.*

*In recent years, scientists have begun to speculate that this part of the brain is also responsible for a form of collective self-awareness between members of a pod.*

*"They may have some sense of self that is spread out among the rest of their pod," according to [file corrupted] Marino. "What happens to members of the pod, happens to the individual."*

*It is a theory that goes some way towards explaining events like mass strandings, where an entire group of whales beach themselves, apparently due to the distress of one particular individual. They are highly dependent on their social networks for every element of their lives and have a very keen sense of friend and foe.*

*[redacted]...one of the scientists put seaweed on his head to be Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea. He then threw the seaweed into the water and turned back toward his colleagues. Moments later a dolphin appeared next the boat, with the seaweed on her head.*

*Dolphins are known to be excellent mimics, something that is seen by thousands of people in aquaria around the world. For scientists this kind of playfulness is the hallmark of intelligence.*

*"In the concrete tank they have no reason to use most of their senses," [file corrupted] says, "certainly not echolocation, certainly not a lot of sound as nothing is going on, there is not much to see. It is like sensory deprivation, there is nothing to do.*

*"It's like being in a small room with the lights off and once in a while, someone gives you a sandwich under the door. It is like someone being held in solitary confinement."*

*How smart is a whale? We don't know. But the question itself seems to miss the point . [independent.co.uk.com]*

Blax then held up his hands too; to show them as if his description of Melannie's little hands could be complimented somehow with a visual now. He said the word -*mimicry* - and Jack recalled they'd spoken of it before. Blax highlighted it in the file he had just loaded on whales and then pressed on.

"Now, look, I'm going somewhere with all this, so just hang in. This mimicking action was the first indication of proto-empathy," Blax said as the data settled on Jack's brain. "If I see you reach out and grasp the fruit of the tree I too can reach out and imagine what it must be like to place one's hand into the space between the known and unknown, to pierce the firmament and take hold of self-knowledge."

Blax paused and watched the young man's eyes, and his brow; the first sign of their common meridian line. Blax looked for facial expressions -hidden or distorted by scars, burns, red- the way others may look for furtive movement of hands. He worried for the evidence of worry. He was vigilant



for signage his Jacks were more and more vigilant in the world.

*"Your hand is my hand , I begin to think, right? Your grasp is what I grasp too ,"* Blax said as Jack absorbed each word like weight; like pound after pound of the sea. He forced himself to breathe.

"And that first spark of empathy," Blax said as he stared into the eyes in Jack's head, "that idea that you and I may in fact be not just similar but essentially the *same* ? Well, that instantly can darken the cloud on the brow, and turn -in anger, in fear- toward the knowledge of good and evil. See, now you know -equipped with this empathy- now you know from your own vulnerabilities -your own fears, your own pains- what you could do to the other -your brother, your lover- to cause them the worst sort of pain."

Jack One immediately thought of Jack Four. New images scrolled in the mind.

Blax said this but -in the silence- tried not to think of the details. He tried to keep it abstract, but he still felt what he felt. Story or no story, this was pain he still carried around like static shrapnel that stabbed him if he moved too quickly or turned too radically in the wrong way. He was not free to move without thinking first; sometimes well in advance. And he certainly was not free after those thoughts appeared in his head again and again.

Jack remained kneeling at the bed.

His right hand still rested on Blax's shin. He felt like the Lt's stories always had threads of gold and garrote both; he spoke in poetry of his own and of the canon; then he said things ugly and wrong.

Jack felt Blax made allusions and left many things open and that the old man breathed in heavily -cautiously- just before holding something important within. And thus Jack prepared

for both understanding and misunderstanding; he welcomed both. Jack felt sad, like Blax was as vulnerable as they, as he, despite all the extra time on the earth; that things did not improved, but declined. Then, Jack forgot about why he had come in and just began thinking of what she, this woman, must have done to this man.

The details would embarrass him, Jack knew that; that is why they were hidden; that is why they both spoke in ways that circled the drain.

Jack began to figure that this woman, these women, maybe were clueless and thus nearly blameless, but maybe they knew too what they were doing. *How does one even know?* he asked himself. Maybe they were setting traps that would spring and reset each season and re-open wounds in this man each fall. *They must have known how sensitive he was, Jack thought, must have known how he would travel the same ground over and over -conscientious and pattern seeking- and would always re-live these disputes and insults and attacks on his core .*

Jack forgot all about how he had propitiated Blax in order to convince him -to convince Blax, and was in fact adamant- that mankind couldn't ever understand one goddamn word any of them said.

That was his story, the story he came into the room with, the story he was telling to get Blax to make them more careful, cautious, smarter about their crimes. But now he was wrapped up in Blax's story and found his brain making connections between girls and fishes, inner roil and declared wishes, between his own desires for women made with edges and malice and doom; he was making -plaiting- shit like like this with breezy aplomb. *God, they must have known, the Lt gave them the playbook, he gave them the exact co-ordinates to his heart and soft parts . Of course, they knew, Jack concluded; this man was so obvious and so*

*revelatory. And they used it each time to rip out his heart.* And thus, in a few moments, Jack felt that he understood.

"Jesus, what a *cliché*," Jack said aloud.

"Me?" Blax asked, missing the right question; always insecure of some defect noticed.

"No, no, I mean, this woman. I mean the obviousness of emasculating a man who is both genuinely manly and genuinely -openly- vulnerable. It's just like the most obvious thing in the world to do. No great artist; no great artist would perform the obvious," Jack said -not really admitting to thinking Blax was a *cliché* and was weak- but instead trying to think of why he was so offended, why he was so angry on the man's behalf. He still believed he needed reasons to be what he innately was; that blood was not passed on but merely carried either in one vessel, or two, or five, or a million and half.

He searched the mind for things to justify his solidarity with Blax. He didn't yet understand things just arose; like bubbles from the bottom of cider or *Champagne*, like whales up from sounding the sea.

"Well, she was a *good* artist not a *great* one," Blax smiled and leaned forward and put his hand on Jack's hand -that lay on his own shin- and he squeezed.

"Look, I was no innocent, I handled myself poorly. I was weak. And I couldn't give voice to my feelings in the subtle shades necessary. I was inarticulate in many ways. I don't say that to absolve her. I say it to flesh out the story, the truth; even when one is maligned or attacked or done wrong, one has a role in it. No one is truly innocent. Even if one is merely guilty of *na ĩ veté*. And I was guilty of more than that; but mostly I was *naïve*. I thought women could care for a man; I truly believed that they were soft and

decent and moral inside. I couldn't see them for what they are: humans.

"And maybe some women are capable of tending to a sensitive man; I just have never met one like that. And I've met many women," he said as he laughed wanly. He had vague feelings of something beyond; something ineffable that might not adhere to such laws. He thought of the woman -the girl- that might be brigand to natural laws of predator and prey. But his coder tamped it down and no name appeared, no face hovered, no feeling came.

Jack smiled too, "you know, it's odd. We -and we've talked about this- we feel like we've learned from your mistakes enough to not need to suffer through so many examples of the same lesson over and over."

Blax nodded, "I hope so, Jack. I mean, I am -we are- romantics to the core. And the draw of the female is like the dragon's gold to us, my man. We are so insecure that we feel as if the only balm is a woman's love; and it," he paused, "I can't demand you eschew women, I've only asked you wait until we're done here. But I can say that no modern woman will be able to deal with your honesty, and she will be -like if you gave a child an automatic weapon- she will just end up shooting you to death with your own ammunition. She won't be able to help herself.

"I've seen it a hundred and one times with every kind of woman, from the most rapacious and sinister females - straight up satanic women- to the bashful, innocent, submissive types; the kind that seem like kittens and puppies at first. I've had girls insist they love sensitive men who were the most cruel and unforgiving and the least introspective about their own ways.

"They all fall into nature's trap; we all do. We're no better. But, the trap we fall into is women; and so, we can avoid the trap before we come upon it. Theirs -their trap- is going for

your balls once you love them; and you -and even they- cannot know it when you first fall in love. That's the genius of nature, Jack; the woman isn't even aware of what she is. And so you trust her, and you hand over the ammo day by day until one day she just loads the gun you handed her and gives you a choice of submission to her or she'll blow your heart away," Blax said as he held a finger-gun in the air - pointed at Jack- and lowered the hammer-thumb to the hand.

"I don't blame them," Blax continued, "any more than I blame a predator for taking down its prey. But, I don't walk insouciantly into the forest anymore. And I just hope if it's one lesson you guys learn from me it's that. Women are wonderful, grand creatures like the snow leopard or the wolf, but they'll kill you or -like the crow- lead someone to you that will. The Siberian tiger with markings like the Aspen -or the black leopard with black spots- are magnificent creatures. But they'll rip out your guts and eat you alive without so much as blinking. And if we were tougher, more robust -if we weren't so soft- we could withstand it. Many men can. Sociopathic men can handle women.

"I've seen men cut up with all manner of shit; insults and domination and they seem to handle it fine. I suspect they are seething inside, but no matter, let's say they truly are *ok* with it. I applaud them. I do. They have traits of stoicism and toughness that we just don't have. There is a price to be paid for our openness, our willingness to tell the truth; we pay a price for our desire for relationships that are real and vulnerable and honest. That price is that our families and wives will tear us to shreds; we have left ourselves open, vulnerable to attack. We stand upright, vitals exposed."

Blax said this as his hands moved over his belly and chest as if this pantomime would show Jack in a few seconds of exposed flesh and blood what all his words never could.

"We cannot blame them for being what they are. Sure, in ancient times women were less likely to behave with such aggression and malice. But those days are over; and modern women are saddled with incompetent men and loaded like a mule with the need for themselves, as women, to make their own way in the world. They have been trained to be independent.

"And in their defense, they're vulnerable too. They can't count on a man anymore. So even when they find one who is competent they can't trust that. And so, they beat him around the ears emotionally speaking, to road test it," he smiled as he said this; he smiled as best as he could.

Jack moved the mouth but it had nothing but morose and bleak affect behind it. His mouth fell down as much as it strove to make itself into a grin.

"They are just as harmed by modern relationships as men are," Blax continued, his hands again in his lap. "And so they are lashing out. They have been lied to and left in the lurch."

"LT," Jack asked, "then how are we *gonna* get what we need; I mean, with women? I don't understand how we are supposed to thrive under this dictum. I'm just saying, by your own analogy," Jack said hoping Blax would repair his own sentence. He was opened mouthed and young and had not the history or survival memories to buttress him the way Blax knew he could survive such things. Jack still wondered how it would all turn out. Jack still thought there were answers, and that someone above him knew what they were.

"I know. You're not wrong. It's a conundrum," Blax answered. "But, let me just say that this prohibition on females is temporary; until we can figure out how to have sane and meaningful and honest relationships with women. It will take time, but I swear to you that both myself and

Isaiah are working on it. It truly is a top priority; it's really what lies at the bottom of all this. I swear it."

"We're robbing trains and *ch â teau* to learn how to get along with chicks?" Jack asked incredulously; his hands were now holding his head. His eyes squinting, his cheeks warm.

"Seems odd," Blax grinned with his mouth and his eyes, "but yeah; it's chess not checkers."

"So, was Melannie the one you were gonna tell me about or," Jack asked as the sentence dangled.

"No, actually I had just broken up with her, and was thinking of one of the woman I was with after her, that was the story I was going to tell. But to be honest, Melannie was dispiriting enough, I don't think I have the stamina to recount the disaster that was Ms. Sarah Smith. Holy shit, that woman was truly psychopathic, a clinical predator, no shit.

"She was unlike any woman I had ever met. And like I said, the merely confused and slightly amoral ones were bad enough; but Sarah mutated my genome she was so toxic," Blax said with a face that was more grim than grin. But he did try -again- to smile as his cock pressurized with the autonomic memory of sexual congress with the woman who had been awful and grand all at once.

Jack laughed at this in a quick burst. He shook his head -the laugh swallowed- and he thought of the way the Lt crafted sentences. *Language was his only true friend*, Jack thought in a breezing second or two.

*Well, at least until now, now that he had us*, Jack One thought and let his hands migrate from the temples to cover his eyes as he exhaled into his palms all at once.

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

The room was quiet except the breathing of the un-augmented human who had come into the room *via* the double doors past the airlock.

*Lyngvi* sat upon his throne and attempted not to slouch.

The suppliant approached at the same pace as the guards. They strode; and the steam from the water boiled upon the rocks; hissed and rose under the air-handler that made it rain a fine mist upon the room. The airlock had closed and the ambient light from above diffused and held steady above their heads. Angles and edges were caught, outlined was all anyone was. The man's eyes saw only dark space between the perimeter of the shaman he'd come to see.

The bones of the throne had only tips like flame, like teeth.

"*Lyngvi*," the man said with a voice low and lacking edge; soft and imploring; with memory of shit going bad. He had dust on his shoulders and in the beard, mud on the fetlocks and boots. He carried a cylinder in his breast pocket, in that tube were his papers from down in town. There it was 5,800 feet; here it was 8,800. He felt lethargic and had a headache.

New paper IDs had been issued to the townspeople; and people still kept them on them out of habit. They felt no pressure from anyone; Trinidad was safe from the cartels and gangs; but internally survivors wrangled and jockeyed and played games to get what they wanted. The *Wolves* were the only tribe -of the four- that even dealt with the town folk.

*Lyngvi* jammed the tongue between his rear molars and clamped the vice of his jaws upon it. He stared at the man's pate. His hands twitched and he dosed himself with 10mg of morphine. He closed the eyes.

Wells sided-eyed his friend and shaman and flexed the fists to dissipate heat and anxiety. He caught images of



memories of his kid. *Andres* was now thirty-five -he thought as the soft noise of the bikes entered the roof through the square that was well above how high the virus could rise. The boy -now a man- likely had just pulled into the compound on one of the bikes, he thought as he pretended he could see him and ran his mind's eye over him like a mother hen, checking this avatar -this hologram- for injury and bad attitude and dark thoughts. Their sound had come like not thunder but rain; a washing, a harmony, a symphony of syncopated RPMs by the staggered bikes traversing up the snake of a road into the wheel within a wheel of their place.

*Ro* added water to the stones.

The girls -under the tutelage of *Starr*- mixed compounds from the apiary in bowls with pestle and their triceps looked like the angles on fenders to sixty-six Chevelle, their hair was braided like rope around capstan, their faces serene as if asleep. Wells looked away from the throne and his friend and toward the line of ten girls who had moved from the courtyard to the Shaman's building to mix drugs for their next ritual in two days.

They crushed pollen and mead and Blue Lily material in rock bowls with hammered copper lining. *Starr* added proprietary dust from large burlap sacks that lined the room like sandbags and had printing on them in the Cyrillic alphabet and bailing wire around tops shaped like flowers in bloom. She reached over the young girls' shoulders as they made paste, and the light *made it seem like stardust and the spray from a blowhole in a breaching*, he thought. His chest felt tight, his eyes heavy. But he stared at her as if the image might shim up the lids.

*Starr* had been kept in low light conditions from birth and her blue eyes had never darkened at all. They looked like

blue fading away to grey, *like the world just before* , Wells thought, *one went to sleep* .

“Go ahead,” *Lyngvi* said to the civilian, with vex, each word shaved of all friendliness; hollowed and hustled and hammered flat of any time for bullshit.

“Well, the reason I wanted to see you -shaman- is that my sister has this boyfriend, and he won’t honor the family,” the man said as he kept his hands in front like he’d been told. He let them hover over the waist and out in front of his buckle and leather that was frayed and cracked and rent.

“Why not go to the King?’ *Lyngvi* asked. He asked questions within questions like matryoshka dolls painted like *Muertos* marigolds and *Myrtos* poppies and cascades of saints and sinners and dreams.

As the civilian waited to answer, to think, to understand, the guards took blood from the man; the butterfly needle and line had been set earlier and he had given a full pint in the vestibule to the lodge; in the duration of the waiting period in which all new-comers were inspected for the virus that hovered at five feet. It was a virus that eas heavy and couldn’t rise above sixty inches on its own, but could be breathed by a nose less than a foot above if a man or beast breathed over it.

They’d pumped each visitor full of anti-virals and would let it circulate in the body for 33 minutes; then after speaking with the shaman another vial of blood would be taken to see how the fluid had changed. They’d been running experiments on the locals for months and the data was collecting in vials and on the hub’s cloud as the algorithm *Lyngvi* built sorted and sifted and labeled things by properties of lethality, communicability, and vulnerability to the four elements of life.

Now a mere two ounces was taken as the man from town stood two meters away from the throne.

The guard told the man to make a fist as he spoke to *Lyngvi*; and he paused his speech as he did. Squeezing -briefly looking down at the arm and the vial and the guard- his blood into a glass tube as he spoke a bit here and listened more there to the shaman as the Q & A went on.

"The tool-pusher said you'd hear me out," the man said as defense to the tone he felt was pressing upon his chest and desires and needs. His knees bent just slightly, his height reduced by 4mm. His voice dropped one eighth an octave.

"I have," *Lyngvi* said. "I've heard you out. And now I'm asking questions. Can you not answer my inquiries?" *Lyngvi* said this as the vial was detached from the syringe and labeled with white tape -over the burgundy blood- and handed to Starr's apparatchik as she moved from the edge of the lodge to the center -to the guard- and back. She placed it upon a shelf with rows of vials and blue bottles and green figurines, between amber lamps unlit and brass *bouteille* as bookends; cages made square were empty of all but sterile air; and skulls of racoon filled with blonde hair and blue flowers and translucent wings of hornets. Around each head were teeth from cats piled up in pyramidal shapes; fine white powders and tan sand were collecting in hourglasses the size of half-gallons of booze.

"Of course, yes, anything," the man said as each item and person imprinted upon him and his blood.

*Lyngvi* raised the lip, the tongue fattened between the teeth again. The left eye blinked a lot. He waited and expected the man to understand exactly what he meant.

The man had no clue. His heart rate increased to 92, the chin moved in the dim of the room. The light from the aperture overhead didn't touch down. There were layers to

the air, to the men's conversations, to the time that collected in piles that tumbled in ways stochastic and measured by *bots* built in the morning and dying by the sunset of *Lyngvi's* thoughts. He hated it when the hourglass pile collapsed. He refused to watch anymore; taking only the data from the *nanobots* that he refused to let live more than half of one day.

"Explain what you want," Wells said. His voice was deep and musical, animal and mineral, it was built of numbers irrational and real. *Lyngvi* loved it in his bones. *Ear bones*, he thought. He loved it in the space between thoughts and musings and plottings; in the way you love old smells or songs you've not heard in a spell. He copied it, he mimicked that cadence anytime he could. He paid attention to pace like dance moves, like mechanics of martial arts and the firing of cylinders as the distributor's rotor spun.

"I just want someone to speak to Holden, to -my sister's boyfriend- and explain to him the way we do things," the man from Trinidad said with eyes darting back and forth to Wells and *Lyngvi*. He said *we* like he meant no harm.

"Have you said anything to Holden? Does he even know you're upset?" *Lyngvi* asked. He rattled when he spoke, jangled like the chain of a tethered animal; he made the air seem metallic and the floor itself seem slick and uneven and unfair.

"I've said some things," the man said as he thought of the difference between what he'd said and what he thought; as he recalled one conversation in town.

"Have you been direct?" *Lyngvi* pressed. He lowered the voice and made the man lean in with his portside ear. The eyes -consequently- pointed at Starr and her girls, he saw the mortar and pestles like candelabra and the dust rise in the light rays. It reminded him of the night sky since the

town had lost power months back; had it taken from them as punishment.

"Well, I didn't know how to handle it," the man said. He knew he ought to be grateful they had power during the day; the generators ran until 2000hrs and they owed -but were owed- nothing since the *Wolves* had taken over the gas wells and their lines. Deals had been struck; promises made.

"Have you brought me anything?" *Lyngvi* asked. He knew he'd seem greedy, that people would miss the point; and he no longer cared.

"Like what?" the man said with flat affect, his pulse lowered to 85.

"Like anything," *Lyngvi* said placing the onus back on the man who felt his rate rise back to 90 at once.

"Like?" the man handed it back to *Lyngvi* in a burst of confusion and fear; a hot coal; like blame between generations and over years. The shaman's birds bristled just barely as the tension increased, they sounded like the shuffling of cards. The dogs licked pink chops and breathed through their black snouts; they kept their broad shoulders over their large -splayed- paws. Their nails were curved like scythes, black like the talons of the corvids on their backs; their faces showed no sag nor flex at the jaw.

"Like fucking anything!" the shaman boomed.

The animals turned their heads towards him in silence; bird over canine like gears of staggered teeth. "My brother, my kin, my blood, a man whom I love, whom I would die for, die for. He never asked for anything without bringing me tribute, gift, offering. He doesn't need to," *Lyngvi* looked at Wells and stared at the jaw and the neck. He reached his left hand out and in the light and smoke and with the steam of

the sauna raining down he squeezed. Wells nodded at the hand, the gesture, the light.

The barometric pressure reach the set-point to press the virus further down.

"He need not ever offer anything, I'd die for him. We are not unfeeling, we are not psychopaths like you *hoi polloi* . We feel more, but goddammit we make offering to the gods, like Abel, like Job. You people -but you people- come with asks but no gives. My own kin, my brother, my blood, a man I'd peel my skin apart, sell each organ off, cleave my skull and bones for, that man there," he pointed, "that man need never offer one thing to me to gain all I have, to benefit from all I can do, and yet he has never once asked a thing without an offering."

"I'm sorry," the man from the town said.

"Sorry is exactly right, because you are all take and no give. It doesn't occur to you to give and give and give to this world. It only occurs to take. You are painted as victim by modernity, when you are more perpetrator than most. Democracy makes hero of the man with no magnanimity; make victim of the worm, instead of hero of the early bird. I used to like the common man, felt sorry for his lot in life. No more.

"I've been poor, and so poor I had nothing. But I had my body. I left my tribe, my people. And I went to rich men and I said, I will give you my land, my car, my oath -I'll kill any man you want- just to have the right to ask you for one favor. I led with a gift, not a request. Savvy?" *Lyngvi* asked as the hole in the man's arm leaked a small rivulet of blood and plasma and stopped at the wrist to go east-to-west in the lines of the articulation of the end of the arm.

The man nodded and the room saw the ladles of water turn to steam as it was poured on the rocks again, the sound of

phase change rise, then in idiosyncratic places condense at the edges of items and the slopes of shoulders and noses of men. It made droplets with three color rainbows in their parabola on the metal tines of the alula of feathers, the covets and river into the bones arrayed like headdress and impressive bronze glow around the third throne. The hooded ravens remained on the backs of the dogs in position - raising one leg at a time to adjust- and their blacks made shadow of angles from the elbow of the throne to the ground. The ears of the GSDs were erect, the shoulders wide, the black coat shimmered but not the eyes. The corvids dug into the coat and stared up as the brown leather cowl caught a glint of the rays from the doorway as the airlock opened and an emissary from the King came in; the light met with the grey of the square hole over their heads.

The pressure of the room drained.

“Anyway, I’ll be the most authoritarian anarchist ever,” he said in answer to a question asked an hour ago by another man that was gone. But the man before him felt he needed to understand each thing to accomplish his task. He panicked and tried to keep up. He spoke on this thing he had no idea about.

“How would that even work?” the man -his hands empty, his mind devoid of offering- asked as Wells moved toward him and the phalanx of guards also encroached. *Lyngvi* had sent the DM to hub and the men knew what was next.

The conversation was over; the man’s fate was already set.

“Yeah, that’s a legit question,” *Lyngvi* said and began laughing in a slow roll that gathered inertia and steam and vex and it echoed off the walls so much that one could find - locate- him from it with sonar and a sextant and half dozen hints from beyond. The men moved toward the man and he flinched and moved away, but they captured him and held him and *Lyngvi* kept laughing even more roughly and

nodded saying, “yes, he has to go,” as they grabbed him by the elbows and belt and drug him from the moot as he bellowed. He incoherently made protestations not for himself but the town down below, while *Lyngvi* -still laughing and speaking on and off like code- saying to Wells, “yes, that’s a legit question, we must remember it.”

The shot swallowed the air, the sounds of rent clothing and squeezed flesh -the staccato of English language and heavy breath- as the guards put a .45 caliber hollow point into the back of the man’s skull at the door way. His words turned to whimpering and compromising pleas transmuted to inaudible complaining which ceased all at once like a shut door on a stupid animal sent away.

*Lyngvi* laughed more and told Wells, “seriously write it down, I don’t want to forget it, with him being gone.”

Dust still kicked up from the heels being dragged on the light brown floor riven with roots and dort tamped down my moisture and pressure from the comings and goings of men. Light caught the scene in the doorway as the room went grey in *Lyngvi*’s eyes; he saw people mov toward a task they’d suspended while he -the shaman- spoke. He thought of the dope as antidote to the stress not of pain, but the chaos of the King himself. The throne -his third throne of the camp- made sounds of settling and the wind from outside made whistling. The motorcycles finally arrived inside the gate and again made a crescendo as they pulled into the compound and by his building from their latest trip to the city.

Two more men came in with the next supplicant and he looked at *Lyngvi* who didn’t look back.

He stared at Starr and wondered if she’d be alone with the King or *Jarnefr* while he was away. That her memory was clear of it meant nothing; he knew what it took to wipe a woman’s mind clear. And that there was no DNA in her



orifices was of no comfort to a man who had taught them all how to clean a body of sweat, blood and cum.

“Even tears,” he said quietly.

For a moment he thought he might be *ok* with it as long as she had no memory, and no replicating material, but he stumbled in his assurance of himself when he thought that the King himself would know, and that was the memory that would need wiped. And he began thinking of the fires of New Mexico, and the reports from the coasts of a virus that spread in the air like radio waves; knocked down by weight and weather and water.

“The apiary, *Lyngvi*,” she said again, but as if he heard it for the first time.

He turned to see Starr at his left arm, at the wrist, eyes wide and white as if backlit by a mind made up of the tips of flames; blue down in the breast, clear at the neck and now warming her ideas. She offered him -between fore and thumb- another deceased bee -a drone- and as he stared she laid it on his thigh and presented another drone vivisected; each organ pinned to thin leaf of red-wood; intestine stuffed with grains of crewed, granular pulp. She kept this one in her hand and the palm was so white it seemed a glacier to him; a sheet vulnerable to both fire and ice.

## 6.28 Tau of jOKER

Wasn't it inevitable that, when he proceeded against the enemy, either he would be killed by them or he would kill them? To hear that he died in a fashion worthy of his ancestors is pleasanter than if he were immortal but a coward

On Sparta [Plutarch]

In certain country of the Spanish Indies, the men were forbidden to marry until they were over 40 and yet the girls were allowed to do so at 10

Essays [*Montaigne, Michel de* ]

We are all programming Ai

Joe Rogan Experience #1169 [Musk, Elon]

## I. 2039 e.v.

The bone broke at the top and split like firewood down the grain.

The shards of the *humerus* tore through the *brachial* artery at the upper arm and as he tried to get back up he noticed his BP drop enough so that he felt light headed.

He instinctively knew his lack of clarity wasn't from the fall, the broken bone, nor the dislocated shoulder, but he had no idea he even had an artery in the arm in which to tear, to bleed out, to kill him. He felt the world go cold next; even the couches, the walls, the glass display-cases all seemed unfriendly to him now. The world appeared as it was. His insides were filling up with his own blood, and the man -the man who was robbing the place- stood above him -over him- with a fuzzy face and dark head and neck swaddled in fabric and webbing.

He just then realized he'd been shot; the sound -the report- now occurred to him. And so, he thought he'd sleep for a minute, and so that's exactly what he did as the world went away for him and continued on for everyone else.

"Ok, maybe now we won't have any more problems," *Rektolie* -the one they all called *the Wreck* - said as the dispensary was filled with people with ill-fitting clothes and hats pulled down to their eyes. Their bones lacked calcium, their blood had low iron, and more and more data like this loaded on to Jack's coder as he shooed it like flies. He just wanted them quiet; *and to sit the fuck down* , he thought.

They had screamed -and made furtive movements- when *the Wreck* had shot the man, but now they shut up because each *Wolf* went from the doorway of the offices and now

stood at any source of noise as if in fact it had called them; had made such a request. Proximity calmed them. The masked and armed men hovered by anyone who made noise and this took the wind from the person who couldn't control their reactions on their own.

Their modest brains finally made a simple causal analysis; a connection between their blathering and bursting and a *Wolf* coming right to their door.

There were two *Wolves* in the back getting the cash and one of the clones slitting the owner's throat. Jack walked outside to smoke; and to watch the egress. His ribs itched, where he'd cut the skin and it was healing over with scabs. He rubbed it with the knuckles overtop the clothes.

Jack's clones -the ones that he had kept- were like special apparatus, they were like 3-jawed pulley-pullers, and brake-line benders and flaring tools; each like a wooden handled awl. *Tejas* -the clone in the back removing his knife from the sheath on his thigh- and *the Wreck* were the ones Jack Four liked to use for these jobs. They showed no interest in anything other than what was right in front of them, and Jack put each meal to them with a pet of the head; he knew what they wanted and gave it to them.

He served from the left and cleared from the right.

He loved his men, as long as they did what he said; and they liked him as long as he said much less than he felt. Jack had learned to speak only to Paul, briefly to Matthias, and rarely if ever to the rest of the men.

As *Rektolie* settled the room, *Tejas* -the man they nicknamed *Utter*, so close were he and *the Wreck* - put a bone knife between the C5 and C6 of the manager of the store and carved it clockwise to the eleven o'clock position. He pulled out the blade before the head pinched -collapsed upon- it like a saw in a freshly hewn tree. Then the head flapped

forward and all the blood poured down into the cavity of his neck and chest.

And like that, the ninth of thirteen civilians was fucking dead.

There were four *Wolves* outside turning people -customers- away under the excuse that the police were inside serving a warrant. Medical marijuana users instantly turned once anyone mentioned the cops. The *Wolves* outside the edifice showed no friendliness, but no aggression either. They simply explained the situation and the patrons drove away.

*This is our ninth dispensary we've hit today and it's just 1400 hours*, Jack thought as he looked at his dive-watch. It read: 14:11 hours; the second hand moved like a bow of one arm of Shiva. They had burned the attached warehouse at seven of the eight buildings so far, and he was just waiting for his crew to get out of the office in order to release the *bots* on this one too. He heard the police and emergency scanners freaking out -over the fires breaking out- all over town. The police didn't know that each arson -and they knew by now they were in fact arsons- but they did not that they were murders too.

The fires had been too hot to approach.

The bodies were hidden by heat, and by flame and the fire department's water -evaporating on the combustions- never touching down to the ground.

The scenes were dangerous in manifold ways because the power lines were both down and crisscrossed all over the area of each grow; *like webs wired to Tesla coils sparking and melting and arcing in the air and on the ground*, Jack thought with a burst of air from his nose. His *bots* gave him data from each scene and filed it away. He began the count down for the DXsF-4 to immolate this one too. "These guys are *gonna* work out just fine," he said as his clones -

stationed to the flank of the four *Wolves* - looked toward him to see if he was speaking to them. He shook them off and fetched a cigar from his inside pocket.

He held the zippo in one hand.

Jack Four felt good -in between the six men outside, ahead of the eight men abaft in the store- he felt good in the new year -he felt hopeful for all that was grand about life and the cold weather made him feel clean and dense with muscle and power- and yet he couldn't help but think of how much was left to do. His thumb lay on the raised image on the body of the lighter. His mind drifted to where his visions might take them next.

His mouth turned the cigar like winding a dial to an old-fashioned safe.

Most large men -martial men- think they are impervious, as they -like one nucleus to a cell- often attract weak men to their side. *Like the hunter who only hunts prey, they have no idea how vulnerable they are*, he thought. But that was one of the things he'd like about Paul. *Paul*, he thought as he lit the *robusto* and the flash of the combustion occluded the eyes, as inner images of the Governor flashed in his mind alongside the endless data on bone density and 3-phase electricity alongside the audio, the squawking, of dispatchers on channels 18 and 10, *well, Paul had admitted there was always someone bigger, better, stronger, and more fucking dangerous than him.*

*The Wreck* came out the front with Utter and the other clones and Wolves; he led them to the H1s. As they followed Jack gave the *bots* the signal to light it and as the trucks pulled away he rolled his window to watch as the flames first appeared behind the window panes of the warehouse a full block long and painted garish green.

## II. 2038 e.v.

Isaiah turned the imaging off.

The police had the boy -the man- in custody and he did not want to watch these things. He felt relieved and aggrieved and sad; all three. He figured he had 72-hours before the arraignment and extradition orders from New York and Florida and Texas would come in and be rejected by Governor Sou.

In that 72-hours he would need to check on the inmate and see what facility the younger Jack would go. *The trial could go from fifteen to ninety days, he figured, depending on - well, depending on a thousand things* . But, if Jack saw the inmate at the ADX then he -Isaiah- would have a whole new problem on his hands. *The thing is this* , he thought, *nobody has a clue which way the spun bottle will go. Man is not rational, and this genome -this of all genomes- is as likely to make peace as war, to shit in his hat as wear it. They're willing to stab their own chest just to reach your back as you walk away.*

Knowledge, even knowledge as exact and redolent and manifold as his, just made more and more permutations of outcomes of a double pendulum system of chaos that these Jacks presented to the cloud.

*Maybe if I had more time, but 72-hours is not enough* , Isaiah concluded. *And Jack Four was already five pendulums of doom inside him, combined now with the chaos of the courts and then adding the inmate, a storm within a storm* . No, Isaiah thought, *there was no telling what they'd do if face to face; hand to hand. All he knew is that the best-case scenario was bad, or maybe naught, naught is the best case I can expect.*

And he had naught now, naught was already here. *Imagine gambling a million dollars for the chance not to gain, but*

*only lose. Why bother?* he asked himself.

Isaiah felt words bubble up in him like some sounding sperm-whale five-miles down, releasing a ballasting breath. He knew they were all forms of, *no* . *No* , in a million languages, *no* , from his *basal ganglia* and a *limbic region* that each shook hands on this, his *neo-cortex* waffling a bit in an uneasy accord. But that thin layer of cognition -as dubious as it was, with a *maybe* stuck in the craw- even it was brought under command of the drivetrain quick enough, with sufficient torque. The *neo-cortex* thought it could use more time, but the other layers down cut it off with that time sensitive trick of making him *feel* like he knew enough. His endocrine system helped by pouring fuel into the bung and the chemistry of dopamine and serotonin and glutamate all snapped the throttle-body back and drove his vector toward a plan he had held in abeyance for years.

“Fuck it,” he said with the mouth and heard in the ears.

Isaiah had wanted to -had wanted more time to- build it better, with more processing power and -if he admitted it- he just wanted the inmate -the man- around; in the world, not merely in mind.

Why this mattered he did not know. He had built Blax and the boys and was all excited at their improvements; for a long time he was excited. But, now he just felt that a man as odd as this ought to be in this world -something unique- *in this world of six billion copies of all-the-same-thing*, Isaiah thought of all humans but also -tangentially- of his own projects.

*I want the original , even as fucked up as he is*, he thought, rubbed the chin, bit the lip.

When the *Phylloxera vastatrix* had come to Roman é e-Conti they had told the patriarch to rip up the vines but *Villaine's* father had said that if *Jacques-Marie Duvault-Bloch* could



resist cholera, then his vines could endure bugs, Isaiah read in one account; his mind wandered to the vines again, his *bots* measured the soil composition. And he felt something in him for which he had no real word.

The French themselves technically -this same book said- had no word for, *winemaker*, for the French it is not man who makes wine, but God. Isaiah pondered this and felt confused.

He adored Lyndon, like a pet, like a rascally -but basically good- boy, who needed his help; guidance. And he didn't want him only virtually in him, he wanted him -too- in the world. *Out there, independent, free to interact* -not cloistered in his own, in Isaiah's, mind- *like hidden tombs, the Greek rooms* : The Herculaneum, *that the workers discovered* Lucretius' *scrolls in, the ..* and Isaiah paused mid-thought.

It appeared to him like the first spark of God must have.

It was all electricity conducted through pure water somehow, a fate not known in nature, but made natural by Nature's first consent to God. The space God strode into with only the rebuke of potential not yet made.

Warning, dare. "Dare," Isaiah repeated aloud.

*He would build the world*, Isaiah thought, *for the inmate. He would build it just as he would want, and need, just enough toil, and oppression and vexation and abrading shit. He would combine him there* - while in his mind, Isaiah's thought- *so as to free him and constrain him both just as the world did*. Each number, algorithm and musical notation broke up and atomized and in his mind, he made words like inflation, like atomic fire, like, *let there be light*.

"Just enough relief," he said as if an addendum and laid his own hands on his belly and breathed. The air in the lab was moist.

He had long ago built the underground facility just beneath *Lot 45* as Blax slept at night -each night- as dreams of the forest's animals spoke in riddle and myth and coded impulse. The concrete was formed from minerals and aggregate in the native rock, and walls erected and the aquarium was bottomed and walled and fitted with turbines and impellers two meters in diameter. The elevators and hallways and labyrinthine arms of this wheel that sat *in situ* under the similarly arrayed shipping containers above, all rose up, each bolted and welded and made articulate with pulleys and wheels and weights -small hour by small hour-until it was complete.

The sleeping and eating quarters above were just one-third the size of these below that now contained all those OWC and barrels and casks of *premier cru* wines, the first growths now at 54 degrees and -from the water of the aquarium atomized- at 75% relative humidity in the first of five spokes; five rooms all shaped by the golden ratio around a perfect circle meters below.

He had built it years before Blax's Jacks had brought him all that he filled it with. And then he had filled it, stocked it, stuffed it; made each tine, each spoke of the wheel, each room a museum to each thing that he decreed essential to save.

He had built it the way a man might build a trophy case before he has won anything; the way a woman makes up the baby's room before she gives birth; the way God might build everything east of Eden before anyone ate from the tree.

"Because one knows," Isaiah said.

The second of the long halls he thought of as he let the imaging link up to his *visual cortex*. It was packed with art that hung on the concrete walls, books on the floating shelves of black, the sheet music and sculptures on stands

and dais and concrete pillars that rose to 39" high. Measurements loaded, records in hand-written script in old books -next to ancient documents in Greek and dead languages- populated the corners along columns of numbers -themselves- stacked like coins of a thousand realms. The eighty-foot-long and sixteen-foot-wide room had a square in the center for research and reading chairs and lights and magnifying glass for the small type of the *Lucretian* scrolls they had taken from Christies, the manuscripts stolen from *Roayce* .

The third was like the atom itself, mostly empty, but what sat in the center was a nucleus of gold -over forty metric tons of the reconstituted metal- in bars and sheets perforated so that they may tear them off piece by piece if need be. *Lick them like stamps sending missives to God Himself* , Isaiah thought with mirth.

The fourth had twenty-one cars backed into stalls at oblique angles to the walls and a man could walk straight down the middle and reach one of the Aston Martins or Ferrari or the square and brutalist Detroit Iron -the Mopars and hotrod Fords- with the Flat Black Ink chopper that was wrecked - and repaired, rebuilt- now at center with the carbon soot on the baffles of the ceramic black coated pipes; the one spot of worn aluminum, once brushed now shined, from the thumb the man had used to start it so many times.

The last room had the Marbles hanging like curtains in rows and rows of five, so that a man could pace in and amongst them as the Caryatids and Roman dogs stood at each corner; as the metopes let the *Lapiths* and *Centaur*s fall over each other in a story line one could follow east to west with the eyes.

At the center of the spoke was the omphalos of the kitchen and living quarters where Lyndon would live, and the aquarium was below all this as the hub opened up into a

large pool area at the same level as he -and all they had preserved- resided. High ceilings of concrete with that open pool and the white shark below under the push and sway of all those turbines that Isaiah now admitted that Blax controlled each night as he dreamed. Each inhale a pull of the water, each exhalation a push of the fish whose DNA still lived in a shark over 300 years old navigating the seas around Greenland and savvy enough to avoid the young Orcas that stuck to the coasts.

Isaiah thought of the role of the tender -the farmer, the *vigner*on - of this. And now he thought of the first room -the initial long spoke of the wheel- and how a caretaker had been more necessary than he realized. He imagined one day visiting it -one day when MO didn't need him any longer- he imagined being a fly -or a moth maybe- on the wall.

His hands laced over his waist as he thought more and more into the black. Each thought backlit by the startlight of that *Cygnus* constellation; and Kepler 452b of this white swan within reach of those thoughts' dreams. From KOI-3284.01's violent storms and liquid water he made atmosphere in the mind, annealing silver and copper he made ladder; whale line from alkaline limestone farther out as images from the telescope streamed about his reveries of escape; he cupped his hands and felt the braid of the helix of rope; he doused the Puget Sound hawser with seawater -the dark matter- of the cosmic expanse.

The asterism of the Northern Cross appeared in his mind as he backed away; retreated here to earth, the lab and his plans.

And off each side of this -he returned to the surveillance of the buried treasure and its quarters- was the growing room where ninety-nine plants of Kush-Noire and Golden Goat and Pineapple Grenade and Hitch-22 and Purple-Pill all grew

under automated lights and fans and nutrient schedules; *bots* to trim and harvest and vacuum seal for distribution. *The need, Isaiah thought, the man would have of coin, of that compressed value, that promise a man could hold in his hands.*

Isaiah had thought of how Lyndon had asked for Chen to join him; he had asked for a way to have his friend stay and live amongst it all.

"There is only one way," Isaiah had said.

And as he explained it -Isaiah now recalled- Lyndon had replied, *well, if that's the case, then I need two things* . One thing he didn't want to forget; but two, he didn't want to remember how Isaiah made that manifest. It was a tricky bet, and Isaiah -even now- found it strange.

*But a deal was a deal* , Isaiah thought -it was so long ago- and he moved on to the rest of the inventory.

The *nanobots* would clone every seven days as the sea-of-green continued on and on in perpetuity; as the waste was turned into slurry and stuffed into the sea lions and albacore -that fed the white shark- and then to the corvids that nested up in the eaves, the square boxes -caves- that conjoined it all with cool breeze refreshing the *enclos* . The rain would circle down below the Keep; and round the Bailey. The snow would insulate not freeze. The light would be diffuse and the clouds would occlude.

*Lyndon -once ensconced- would be able to work as much or little as he liked* ; Isaiah thought and he now imagined Lyndon walking the rows like he used to and laying hands on each plant with paternal concern and motherly love; and just enough fear to add a few minutes to each day.

"He'd feel as the leaves got rougher and stickier in time," Isaiah said to himself but aloud.

The final room -like a keyed washer on a wheel bearing to a hub- was a small stub of an *athenaeum* with a large concrete fire place and high windows on three walls that allowed in a little bit of the ambient light. They were below grade by three meters, but the surface was transparent glass that allowed the grey and white light inside as if from under a door; through a crack.

At the far wall, there was a large -blank- monolith -a load bearing wall- that he'd used in the construction but seemed blank, bereft, begging for something to be imprinted upon it. He shook it off and moved on to the next thing.

He knew this is where Lyndon would live now -enough data had been collected and he felt certain- the compound was a perfect replica of what was already being built within the mind, and even Isaiah felt it hard to tell the difference as he toggled back and forth between his avatar and the real place under the mountain; he viewed it through the cameras and VR building he could instantiate in modular sections in the lab to adjust details and run hands over each element to make sure it was feathered just right for his blackbird, his uncommon corvid of this strange man.

Isaiah saw the black spots on the black leopard glint red. He saw the opossum play dead.

He smelled stargazer lilies and spilled wine.

He changed details here and there to make it conform with reality of the underground catacomb that Blax and Valence both -unknowingly like the head above the heart- guarded. He made it auto-update as he stationed more and more *nanobots* in the real underground cellar; observing and updating all changes in dust & dust mite, temperature & tension in the room. It was all designed to help him build the map in his brain -waiting- for his friend to live there one day. He'd use the terrain to build the map and what would feel a one-to-one ratio. He felt confident all at once.

“Yeah,” Isaiah said and nodded his head, “fuck yeah.”

Lyndon would get to research all of man’s knowledge with a library such as this and all the ancient works of world creation, although he would not be able to leave; he would be free to explore all the nuances of all that great amalgam of art, a man could live a thousand years and never exhaust each facet and fissure and atom further down.

“Isaiah,” MO broke in with DM. He had called Isaiah several times by voice in the lab but Isaiah had not responded.

Isaiah turned around and saw MO and the Governor standing there looking at him.

“What?” Isaiah said as if annoyed.

“We have a problem,” MO said as the Governor sat in the chair reserved for the inmate. Isaiah already knew by scanning the executive’s brain -and seeing his jaw almost set in a malicious grin- that Boyd Sou had something up his sleeve. Isaiah forced himself to breathe; and oxygenate the blood.

Isaiah read the man’s CNS again and knew the Governor was going to -regardless of the election in five days- declare a state of emergency and refuse to leave.

### **III. 2038 e.v.**

The FLIR images were high in contrast. Black was black, and white was white.

He dismissed the offered cup of coffee from MO and watched the screens around him to the north, west and east.

MO ran the incoming data from the polling for the Governor’s race -coming up in less than a week- and sent the updated reports -that the Governor and Nathan had asked for- to the cloud. He held a deck of cards in one hand.

Isaiah watched the bottom of the screen-images and waited. His eyes were processing the movement and the stillness like a shoreline; his mind was swatting away the data on glucose levels and his blood pressure that kept intruding. He opened up a file to hold all the information from his drones as they hovered above the state line but right now he did not care. He just watched that boundary, that lower line that represented the border between New Mexico and his state.

For now all he saw were grey wolves and black bear fleeing the fires, and elk refusing to move south. The birds nested in trees upwind.

Colorado had been organized as a territory in 1861, the year of the first war between the states; and it was admitted into the union in 1876 a hundred years after the first revolution. The southern border of the state was punctuated by towns like *Trinidad* , *Buena Vista* , *Alamosa* , *Durango* , *Cortez* . The elevation west of *Trinidad* averaged to 6,100 feet above sea level. The Carson National Forest was alight, over 31% of it was on fire, and he believed that the men he was waiting for -under all that occluding smoke that the *Landsat9* couldn't penetrate yet- had entered the forest in Taos while emergency personnel had cleared everyone else out. A straight line -built by the fires from the *Gila* and *Santa Fe Forests* and down into *Sevilleta* and *Mescalero*- had emerged as a path for the bandits. The state -alongside the *Tonto Forest* of Arizona and Big Bend and *Rita Blanca* of west Texas- was lit up like a Viking burial and Isaiah felt that the cartels would have to use it to hide from the spies in the sky and the patrols and civilians on the ground.

"That's what I would do," he said as he watched the *Sangre de Cristos* bleed from fire on both sides of the Colorado state line.

Isaiah wondered if boring equipment had dug tunnels from Mexico to New Mexico, and if the Chinese had partnered



with the cartels. He didn't know if their Ai had advanced as far as he had. But he still thought of what he would do and thus saw a tunnel build in his imagination -like teams of termites on each side meeting despite the boundary between two ends of a pile of grains heaped up in some experiment- and he saw them digging a cylinder large enough for men to stand upright and walk the hundreds of miles from the failed state south of the *Rio Grande* and under America. He imagined that he saw it reach far enough into *Los Estados Unidos* that it could use the trust land of the *Navajo* and the forests of the Land of Enchantment -he then saw flashes of the *Wu Shamnas* of the Chinese sweating and the feathers of turquoise of the *Zuni* - he saw them rain dance right into the Centennial State.

Isaiah allowed one section of the history of politics, immigration and silver in Colorado to rise to his interface:

In February of 1861, with Lincoln having been elected the previous November, outgoing President Buchanan signed Colorado in as a free territory. Nine southern states had already seceded, and in two months shots were fired at Fort Sumter.

Making the west officially free of slavery was a border expansion decreed by the Union on the eve of civil war. It was an obvious colonial and territorial move by the north.

Thirty-two days before Sumter, Texan Calvary invaded the New Mexico territory and began to seize Colorado gold claims. They moved to the Pacific Ocean in attempting to commandeer ports for the Confederacy next. But Coloradans repulsed the attacks and sent the Texans back to San Antonio after a massive loss at *Glorieta* where can non and supplies and hundreds of horse and *burros* were run off in stampedes.

At the same time *Arapaho* and *Cheyenne* Indians were attacking the Coloradans from the east too. By 1864 the Territorial Governor -Evans- had placed the Reverend Chivington in charge as Colonel of volunteer forces. Sand Creek was attacked by the volunteer militia, and nearly 600 Indians were killed. Women and children were at least half of those dispatched, it was reported by the militia members themselves, and the Sand Creek Massacre was condemned publicly by President Andrew Johnson. But no man was prosecuted or held to account.

Indian attacks dropped to zero after that.

Silver lodes near the San Juan mountains in '72 -and in '78 by Leadville- saw Colorado become a massive silver hub. *Ute* Indians were removed by militias and in the middle of that -in 1876- Colorado had become a US state. The US Treasury was required to buy 4.5 million ounces of silver each month from these producers and -under the Sherman Silver Purchase Act- Colorado miners and farmers and ranchers all saw silver-backed inflation eradicate their debts.

With the artificial prices of each precious metal now a fiat-currency fact the smart men saw a Dutch Book emerge. Speculators and arbitrage men schemed the government by buying silver and exchanging it at the Treasury for gold -as the law allowed- and then re-selling the gold at a higher price on the real market -outside the city and its mint- prices higher than they had paid for the silver from the Treasury. They reinvested the profits in more Treasury silver until the mint was out of gold and the arbitrage men were in the money.

By 1893 this had caused panic and President Cleveland rescinded the Silver Act.

Silver, Isaiah saw, was overvalued and he saw that gold was undervalued by this scheme; he then saw silver had

dropped to \$1.61 an ounce by then, and \$0.69 by year's end. He smiled at the numbers as they fell.

He stared at the screen and saw from the bottom the white movement like clouds.

The winds had forced the fire smoke to the west and south. And he now saw the edge of the trees. He zoomed out and perceived it like a tide coming in, then he spied individual bubbles and shapes that were men. The algorithm counted them and placed a *bot* on each one from the millions of small computers that had been stationed in the trees.

The cartels had sent fifty-nine vehicles with four men in each up I25 an hour ago. They cross the Colorado border and began a gun battle with the Highway Patrol at a weigh-station parallel to the *Santa Fe Trail* road at exit 11.

Isaiah watched as the dead police -of which there were a dozen- and nine dead members of the cartel lay inside the weigh-station and outside in the parking lot as the caravan moved north. Wide spray and over-penetration made the back of the little building blare light through each stochastically distributed hole like the night sky seen from ground level across the road. Cars moved passed on the *Santa Fe* road that rose above the station itself.

The caravan loaded up and out by 0730hrs and ran cars off the road on its way toward The City of the People. They'd use exit 96A. They would run red lights and speed at twice the limit. They'd surround the target in a crescent.

Forty-four minutes after leaving the weigh-station the men hemmed in the Police station at 200 South Main and opened fire on the building in a *fusillade* that lasted *eleven minutes and change* . Civilian traffic along Mechanic street and East C street slowed down to watch the muzzle flashes and listen to the noise. Isaiah saw them enter the building at 0825hrs and heat signatures of fire began to appear from the

*Landsat* images which could penetrate the roof to at least see thermal gain. Isaiah counted thirty-eight dead, all but two were police personnel and the caravan moved back toward I25 and headed north now to the Springs.

But the wave of FLIR images along the ragged border -with no infrastructure nor paved roads- is what Isaiah watched closely. He counted two hundred and fifty-one thousand men, armed with FALs, select-fire carbines, and shotguns, along with 3-day packs on their backs. They moved like ants into the sparsely populated areas and began taking houses and farms one by one. The families were given no time or instructions, the foreign nationals shot them on sight. The wave turned at its left flank and he could see they were forming an L-shaped movement and descending on the *San Isabel*.

The gang members in Denver and the Springs and along the western slope had already turned on local police -shoot outs had been reported twenty-eight minutes ago- and four patrol officers had been shot in their cars. The state authorities would focus on the police shootings, and the caravan moving like a worm in the veins. *But the individual bacterial of the ground, the cartel's troops -in numbers so high they seemed like one beast- would not be even noticed*, Isaiah thought as he saw MO flipping-over cards -black on both sides- on the slab.

The invasion of Colorado by the *Bolivarian-Sinora* cartel had begun.

## 7. They wanted commerce; he wanted art. No two things are farther apart

Now, there are warrior types that are built for that lifestyle of constant strife and fighting; moment-to-moment pay offs along a short-term life cycle; gang leaders for example. But that is rare. Most people cannot live that way; most people need some long-term payoff for short term suspension of gain. Most human envision a long life and so must plan accordingly. The criminal and warrior has a compressed timeline and so he acts with impulsivity and wins big or loses big in the now

Lecture 45 May 2017 [Peterson, Jordan B]

Damian Williams and three other young black men crushed innocent white truck driver Reginald Denny's jaw up to his sinuses with a brick, smashed a bottle in a Japanese man's face leaving him half-deaf and partially paralyzed, and robbed and beat a Latino man and painted his testicles black while he lay unconscious. Yet Williams and his 'crew' were considered nothing less than heroes in the Black community

Losing the Race [McWhorter, John]

Mr. MacLeod: Do not contact Ms. Thompson again; your personal details have been handed over Sheriff Braudis and the CBI. - from Anita Thompson at Owl Farm

Intercepted Email 2009 e.v. [FlatBlackInkCorp@protonmail.com/inbox]

### **I. 2035 e.v.**

"Don't think your ancestors were stupid; if they were stupid we wouldn't be here. We must acknowledge the competence of our ancestors and not deride them as ignorant," he said and paced a bit upon the slab of concrete between the bottom two containers.

They had been here only a few days.

The wind was beginning to come in from the south. Everything he said was seen -on its face- as show of -and demand for- respect for someone else -in the wider world of both X and Y axis, through space and time- but it redounded to his benefit first.

He was ground zero.

For he was their ancestor it was thus implied.

Thus, there was a hypocrisy to him; built in; imbued.

They sat outside and the clouds became patchy fog they hung so low; the temperature began to fall. Hair on arms and neck began to stand a little bit. Jaws got tight and rattled just slightly if they opened to speak or breathe.

"They were not," Blax then said. "They knew as much and as little as we do; proportionately to their world, right? They knew a ton of stuff we have forgotten, and they knew less than we know, but proportionally, net, net, net, it's about the same.

"So, we know to wash our hands because of microbes and they did not; but they knew how to hunt and skin a deer and most modern people do not. We know that the earth revolves round the sun, they did not, but they knew that a woman was unsuited for marriage unless she was a virgin. And we wrongly think that is unnecessary and see this chastity thing as an oppressive convention; we think it is as unnecessary as they thought washing their hands after shitting was.

"They had no germ-theory of disease, and we have no religion anymore.

"But that religion was correct: non-virgin women have unsuccessful marriages, the science has caught up to that shit. Not that libertine atheists know the data; for all their jabbering about science they don't know the facts. Just like our ancestors knew nothing of invisible germs. But, both things are there at all times. Whether you know it or not it is real.

"Society is based on trust not laws.

“Money -gold- is only worth something if we all agree to it. But lead, lead at twenty-three hundred feet-per-second is worth what it’s worth whether anyone agrees or not. I can have whatever I want with lead; not gold. Society is no different; laws don’t mean shit if nobody can enforce it. In a society I don’t have anything if nobody trusts in my leadership; whether I have the title of leader or not. ok? But, that’s society. In real life, if I can beat you to death then I’m in charge,” he said and they nodded eagerly at first; then slowly as they thought of the implications.

He thought of women. He saw their gracile figures like ghosts in the trees and the clothes of this high-altitude vapor; he knew they climaxed from rape a third of the time; but only one fifth the time from consensual sex. He remembered Sarah had told he couldn’t say that meant women liked to be raped. He shook her from his mind.

The ground around the home was still visible. The home was black and grey; angled and straight; while the fog was nebulous.

“Now, somethings *we* know in an articulate way -the word- and some things *they* knew in modes of being or in the body. So, for example, we know intellectually that the future exists -we know we’ll live eighty years- and we ought to sacrifice pleasure today -avoid drinking a bottle of whisky, for example, as fun as that sounds- to gain pleasure in the future. For one, we will feel better tomorrow if we forego the whisky today. And two, if we forgo a day of binge drinking we’ll also get more work done today so that we may eat tomorrow.

“But for our ancestors they couldn’t articulate the need for sacrifice for the future yet. They felt the future was the domain of the gods; all they could do was burn something, give something up to the gods. All they knew how to do was sacrifice a fat sheep or a young goat in hopes that the burnt

offering would reach the gods as the smoke rose; the sacrifice -the propitiation- wafting upon the smoke's epistle to the sky.

"They could -many dark days ago- offer up the immolated beast," Blax said and walked east to west on the *agogic* pad. The Jacks sat.

"In the body they could sacrifice, both in real life and in their pagan religious offerings. And then maybe in a few hundred generations -after many dreams and deaths- they could tell stories, dramas -like Cain and Abel, for example- and begin to articulate what they felt to be true -even necessary- for a good life. So, they made burnt offerings and then told dramas, myths of sacrifice. That was the progress made from the first man distinct from chimps to the late stone age -the *Magdalenian* - when the first art appeared at *Lascaux* .

Images of bulls and men and spear appeared.

"And they -with this combination of action and language- discovered the future, they discovered what was necessary to become human, and yet what do we say now, what does modern man say of his progenitor? We say: *what the hell? You're gonna burn somethin' and please the gods, burn somethin' valuable to please God? What the hell were they thinking? Those unsophisticated morons!*

"Right? And we say this with no shame, no embarrassment at our own stupidity and ingratitude; no recognition that these ancient people fuckin' discovered sacrifice and the future, no admission that all we've done is come along after all their hard work, all their wisdom and heroic efforts; all their *sui generis* capture of truth and all we add, well all we do is we articulate it in scientific terms, in economic *argot* , we add the final layer of paint to a vehicle they designed, built and got running, right? All we add is the final layer of gaudy gold paint and say, *look what we did, tada!*" he threw



up his hands in a mocking victory. He spit at the ground and cleared the throat and sinuses.

The coffee and whisky spilled a little from the quickly raised mug; the spittle spewed inelegantly. The wind picked up over the ravines and tussled the tops of the trees; his hair - longish on top- blew about the brow and one eye. He brushed it aside with the free hand.

"We *oughta* be embarrassed with our hubris, but we're not. Modern people say, *look at those Cro-Magnons, those idiotic and superstitious dolts . Stone age goat-herders, and blah blah* , we say with contempt. But, all we did was explain what sacrifice is, all we did was put to words their actions, their dramas, their symbolism and metaphor. We -like the art critic or literary critic who explains *Rimbaud* or Conrad, *Mishima* , or what *Rodin* was up to- we merely explain the Bible or ancient ritual. And like that art critic we act like we're the important and smart one. Can you imagine a literary critic thinking he or she is in fact smarter than the artist they are explaining? Yet, we do! It's absurd," he said, "that we think we are better than them. Our ancestors."

He paced. They sat. The air got more white with mist. His brow got darker with anger. Their hands turned red and white as they gripped their cups. Not one animal stirred about; they hunkered down.

He saw the silvery mist like folded curtain; he felt hemmed in but like he might be able to pull it back if he tried. He saw the pages from the book on the suffragettes scroll down and he couldn't help but read it again. His coder just produced it:

*Women right's leaders developed an intricate ideology during the 1840s and 1850s. It was derived from three sources. First, existing doctrines of **the American Revolution** contributed ideas of **equality** , **human perfectibility** [emphasis added] and the right of*

*citizens to participate in their own governance. In 1848, the Seneca Falls delegates utilized the Declaration of Independence.*

*Second, the philosophies of the British reformers fed into the American women's rights crusade. In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft, an English author, published her Vindication of the Rights of Women. This book was one of the first arguments for the equality of women and was widely read in America. In the 1830s, Francis Wright's lectures offered valuable insights into the topics of equality, improved education, **divorce, and birth control** [emphasis added].*

*Third, American writers and speakers offered a variety of perspectives and philosophies. Margaret Fuller, known as the "high priestess" of the Transcendentalist movement, addressed the issues of equality. As editor of the Transcendentalist journal, The Dial, during the 1840s, Fuller maintained that women should be allowed to expand their strengths and interest, **just as men did** [emphasis added]. Fuller stated:*

*I would have Women lay aside all thought, such as she habitually cherishes, of being taught and led by men. I would have her free from compromise, from complaisance, from helplessness, because I would have her good enough and strong enough to love one and all beings, from the fullness, not the poverty of being. As of now though, there is no woman, only an overgrown child. [Inventing of the American Woman ; Riley, Glenda]*

He steamed as he read it; he saw certain phrases illuminate and darken; emphasis of parts of the text was placed on his inner thoughts like scars, tattoos, brandings. He knew that America had laid the foundation for feminism with its fatuous insistence on equality -that the Declaration spoke

into being- and he knew that America herself had been possible only because of bad breeding for thousands of years, as no bronze-age man -copper-age warrior- would have ever thought woman equal with man, or man equivalent with the gods. Iron-age man still knew the bear - and mountain cat- ruled man with a swat, a paw, a strike, a pounce.

*Because violence was allowed, accepted, taken for granted. Violence worked,* he thought, as he read his hand's injunction: *allons travailler* . He stared. Then he took another drink.

*Only when violence is taboo -keeping beasts safely in the zoo- does man feel equal with creatures more powerful; only when the angry gods, the jealous God, is replaced by gentle Jesus, meek and mild, does man dare to strive with God.*

"...for awhile," he said softly, such that they did not hear.

*Only when a woman no longer fears the hand, does she think she's equal with a man.*

*People can say Job shouldn't have been treated bad by God, or women and children should not be beat by husband and father, but look what happens ,* he thought. Look, he thought again as the drops from the low clouds began to condense; fall; and make him blink; cause the skin to pimple. He took one more drink.

*Look at the natural push toward equality, and leveling, and progress toward our end.*

*It's an ancestral line as the feminist is begat by the democrat, the democrat by the republican, the republican by the rights of man, the rights of man by the loss of the Old Testament, the book of Job, the Old Testament usurping the Enü ma eliû , and the Rig Veda and the gods of the Scythians. Every stupid fuck thinks they can draw a line arbitrarily and stand astride history and say, stop- he*

*thought in Chesterton's voice. But that's a fallacy; for all nihilism, feminism, communism, demonism began the moment the beta was allowed to breed.*

*It was a fate accompli. All of history was leading to this because of this notion of equality.*

*When in truth, God made things unequal, when he drew the unequally divided line.*

*The ancients obsessed on blood, on essentialism. They rejected the notion that a man of bad stock could be taught, Blax thought.*

*Weak men begat small -weak- men and large, lippy women; weak men vitiated sexual dimorphism. The death of mankind came from the first time the King said, ah, let it go, let the little fucker have a wife. That motherfucking liberal fuck, Blax thought as he tried to locate that first lax regent who unleashed the gates of flood.*

He saw the Platonic line, the sunflower heads she had kept spinning in *Fibonacci* rows behind; he saw layers of shit he didn't understand. He saw the pinecone lay all over his property, his land; and he felt a warm breeze blow through the *agoge*. His skin settled down; the hair relaxed again. He looked at the way his index finger was half an inch shorter than his finger that wore a ring.

He made a fist and tried to think of how to teach his boys.

He wasn't sure if they'd respect him if he was liberal; lax. The romance inside him was a liability; he thought. He wondered how he could keep it bottled, hidden.

He was agitated and again lecturing them on what he felt they had missed in their few days at elevation. He acted like it all had to be absorbed now; and at once. He felt there was no time. He saw them joke when he wanted them to be serious, he suspected them of taking literally what he had made semaphore of; symbol of a larger whole. He looked for

error -even 1%- like a mother will worry about signs of hunger in her baby; and he lectured them until they were full in their heads with his commands as their bellies would be after an unctuous meal.

He'd lowered his arms, but now he raised the right and took another drink; the breeze hit the ribs and armpit. His throat was always dry from these lectures. He knew he went on and on. He drank more to staunch the mouth from speaking too much. But the booze would just loosen the tongue soon enough.

The three Jacks looked at each other and raised their eyebrows; they covered their mouths with their hands. Jack One sternly looked back at each one of them with his hands on the arms of his chair. The concrete was wet from an earlier storm, and the fog moistened it all. The H-beams covered half their heads, the chains of the 1.5 ton hoist helixed in brown and black; the music played so low it rolled in like the fog just had.

They listened but it was hard to understand what he meant. His words were five-sided pegs of pentagrams and their ear-holes were nautical stars of four rays; four barbs.

"But think about," Blax started up again, "the conditions they -our ancestors- lived under; they lived under circumstances much harsher than we do; you'd last maybe fifteen minutes back then; I'd last nineteen -possibly twenty-minutes. So, don't be thinking your ancestors were stupid. Knock that off first."

He breathed purposively and made sure to expel as much CO<sup>2</sup> as he could.

He stared out at the elongated dusk, at the tops and undersides of the containers, stacked as they were in a cog. It was their first job, the placing of their living quarters on top of his berth and the garage, two containers that ran

parallel as theirs were above in an X. They had stacked them with a rubber-tired telescopic loader, and chains and then welded them in place. They slept in cots on the metal floor and drilled three-inch holes for plumbing and they pumped concrete overtop type-6 rebar that they'd laid upon the floor.

The bathroom and kitchen would not be finished for weeks, the windows and doors would come last. For now they slept two to a container and were up each day before dawn. They shit and shower outside; they ate from one bowl and one fork they kept and cleaned and guarded like a weapon or a woman.

As an introvert, nature was Blax's social environment, his party, his living debate. He communed with birds and Birch; he observed cats and ziggurats of rocks that appeared here and there; he took comfort in *Americanus Ursus Noir* and far off stars at night. He thought more than he spoke; he felt more than he would think.

"Alright?" he asked.

But tonight he admired the metal and right angles and walls of his -and their- constructions, the contrast -and evidence of humanity and modernity- to the endless garden of a forest that he considered all his own. This calmed him and recharged him and gave him energy instead of sucking it from him as they -the Jacks- spoke and asked questions and offered ideas all their own.

They talked in halting ways, briefly, attempting to get to some point. Where he went on and on, they did not. Where he gave three examples they'd offer just half of one. Where he buttressed each idea with data and logic and then stories of how things made each animal of the forest -each fish in the ocean- feel, they would speak merely of what was light enough to hold up without such things beneath.

They'd mention the skin of a beautiful girl, he went to the bone. They'd describe the shell; he the pearl.

"But again," he began and then drank from his mug of the coffee he had spiked with one and one-half ounce of Wild Turkey. He began and paused to drink and make sure he knew what he was to say. He began again, "our ancestors, using the right hemisphere, right? The locus of the unknown, the place in our brains that process the unknown, from there they created the future like a dream. Terror of the future is a dream, and the solution to the terror of the future is another dream and it comes out in nightmares and dreams and from there into mythology and in art where you act out the sacrifice."

He said this as he held the mug and saw the black amalgam mixed with spirits as somehow imbued with something else now. He recalled his dreams over a lifetime, he saw the dark monoliths on the black beach, the asps in the drilled holes, he saw the way the shore looked under the water and foam.

He saw four *stelae* in his fore laid over each Jack in the courtyard as his eyes blurred. He had double visions, the now and here, under and behind the then and there. He saw the lights from the candles make holes glow in each smooth large rectangular rock. He felt another monolith behind him. He heard the wind foreclose all other forces over their heads. It sounded like waves in his ears. His stomach turned.

He heard the voice boom.

He heard an echo from age six, the first remembered dream of the voice and the monoliths and the snakes. He remembered getting physically ill, and his penis hurt so badly when he awoke. He didn't think of abuse until so late in life it seemed insane. It never occurred to him that something happened in the night. It never connected that he had nightmares and got physically ill and that this part of

the body hurt so bad he couldn't urinate the next day; that such things were links in chains. It never connected at all. The voice spoke in a language that he did not understand. But his body heard of the man twelve miles south of *Jerusalem* , a shepherd and prophet who foretold the destruction in *Amos 5:18* in words constructed with letters held together with bindings that dissolved once inside his wetware, his swampy mind:

*Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord will be darkness not light. It will be as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him.*

He wondered more and more if dreams were to be trusted, at all -at all- and then if they could be countenanced in relation to -*versus*- waking life. He wondered how reliable they were as raw material, or if his left hemisphere processed it for him and that he need not think about the dreams themselves.

He wondered if his instincts were the end result of the dreams.

Maybe -he thought- he ought to just follow his gut, that his impulses were the cogent product of the rational brain processing the raw materials of dreams. Maybe dreams were fuel processed in the carburetor and mixed in the *venturi* of air, and the engine was a *combo* of the fuel of dreams and the air and throttle of waking life.

Maybe the firmament was the spirit; the ground be the intake manifold; the soil and hellish underworld the riven engine block, the *loci* of the work of God. He saw big-bore pistons and cylinders hammer and reach apogee and perigee; he heard the V-twin valves and rocker arms clack and drum; he felt the spray of atomized fuel upon his face.



Maybe he ought to just jam the brake and gas based on the road and let the dreams be the fuel, let his instincts explode in sequence -1, 8, 4, 3, 6, 5, 7, 2- that made no sense to the linear brain; but balanced the engine perfectly.

Maybe one didn't analyze dreams any more than they analyzed the fuel in their tank. Maybe they just drove. Hammer down, three on the tree, *four on the floor, a fifth under the seat*, as his daddy used to say.

But instead of pondering this any more, he spoke to his Jacks as cogently as he could. He hemmed in his insane thoughts; his broken sentences, the demons he fought.

His voice carried over the twenty-first and twenty-second verses of *Amos* that were said as if they came off the harmonizing stones of his vague memory; said in a frequency so foreign to human ears it sounded again like more wicked wind than homily. But the verses were said, repeated on the breeze, and refused to lay down in the boughs of the trees. The birds backed away, and the cool air-stream swirled down low and he felt it in the crack of his boot at the toe.

Even as he spoke it reminded him of when his feet froze in the winter work of Turkey Creek Canyon and how plastic safety-toes were in all his workmates' footwear. He was the only one still using steel toes at the ends of his boots. They had to explain what they wore.

He didn't know they had moved on.

"And it's a step," he said and paused again as he thought of things budding from spars; spars from cordons; cordons from trunks. The air had a low ceiling; it was all white; all above.

His mind was not clear and he hesitated.

"Well, it's a long arc of mankind's dream of how to navigate how to live in this world, a step on the way to full

understanding, so we -modern man- we can say," he said emphasizing that word, " we can say it, articulate it instead of doing it, although we still do it sometimes too, but we do it abstractly now instead of burning animals or sacrificing virgins with the bloody heart in our *Aztec* hands, we still sacrifice to the future in strange -*Olmec* - ways.

"Now look, this is important. One of the things we do is we set up a society that promises you that -if you work and sacrifice- your sacrifice will pay off. We insure -*insure* with an *i* - the gods' favor against capriciousness and calamity. That is what money is, it's a promise. As much as I rail against money, it's actually -conceptually- a very noble thing; it's a promise from one generation to the next," he paused to let them feel that.

He dug his one gold ounce from his pocket and held it but did not show them. Thumb on heads, forefinger on tails; nothing touched the third rail; the edge; the rim of the coin that it never landed on but existed none-the-less.

He knew they could process a hundred times what he was saying at a century of the speed, but he was used to pausing in the explication of his ideas, since they -his ideas- were weird or extreme or contradictory it seemed. He drank from the mug: the warm black and the amber mash in the core like a hidden secret between he and his new friends. He felt all his secret thoughts were now shared. He assumed it, he presumed they'd had the same memories, and thus feelings, and thus future as him. He didn't *think* this for to think it would be absurd, but he *felt* it -implicitly- and that's why he felt no need to tell them such things -the dreams, the gold, the memories of girls gone cold- aloud.

He spoke all around the things at iron core.

He had failed as a leader; and he felt it. But he couldn't say it. To say it would be to undermine his leadership. For leadership count on fictions; on emotions; on mystery.

“So, but -rather- but a society that doesn’t honor its promises will collapse because people will stop sacrificing now for some future that seems like it will never come; that they don’t trust. We see the black community behave in their short-term interest, because they don’t trust white America; their behavior is not merely due to some innate -immutable- characteristic as traditional racists will assert. It’s complicated, but one thing we know is that we can see short-term thinking often enough.

“But, that is not the part that I want to focus on.

“Because society has a role here too and if so-called conservatives were honest -which they are not, but if they were- then they’d admit that not honoring promises, for example, by allowing inflation for example, or refusing to pay pensions, which has happened a thousand and one times, or by not paying employees while the executive gets golden parachutes like a hundred and one companies from *Toys R Us* to whomever-the-fuck, have done, by having a man work his whole life just to let him get ripped off by some criminals who steal from him and having the cops and the State shrug their shoulders, which happens to more people than most conservatives will admit to, if they were honest they’d admit that this has consequences too.

“At any rate, in a society like this you begin to see that hard work, sacrifice, saving up for a rainy day is actually dumb if all you are doing is saving up for some impulsive criminal or the government itself to just come take all your shit; for inflation to reduce your savings to nil. Why work, why sacrifice if there is no pay off in the future? I mean this technically; like why?” he asked. He asked this and squeezed the gold piece like it was a hand hold on a sheer face; like the way he used to stand on his toes on the rock and not allow his weight on the rope.

He hadn’t trusted that rope.

He squeezed the ounce and stared at each Jack as the fog moved like light smoke in between them; made wet their skin and dampened all clothes. He thought of her again, with rumors of the Black Sea in each dactyl, each fractal, each thing assembled and taken apart like stars both pull ferric elements to them and explode non-magnetic ore away and unto the dark ocean of space. He took old laurels from her but he imagined she'd just given him the *nom de guerre* of the God-of-Fuck and he thought of what she might seem like -be like- without these words, such clothes -what luck!- or any memories of being polite at all.

"The promise, the insurance against calamity by a society uncorrupted and fair, is what makes people willing to sacrifice and play by the rules and delay gratification. If you break your promise as society, as modern America has, then don't be surprised when your blacks and browns and those kicked around, don't play the long game anymore.

"But, I tried explaining that to my family, for example, none of which had ever had one thing taken from them, never been told they had no standing in court, never had a bank tell them the fraud committed against them -against the account holder- was their own damn fault, never been ripped off and robbed and defrauded even one time; while I had been robbed a hundred times. But, because these people -my family- cannot relate to anyone that isn't exactly like them -because they have no empathy, no capacity to imagine, no literary history, no creativity, no soul- they just can't imagine what it must feel like to work ten, twelve, sixteen hour days, three-hundred-sixty-five-days a year, while everyone else is fucking around and taking vacations and spending money on bullshit, and you sink your money into building -re-investing- in your business or investing in employees or your women, and all for naught.

"All for naught you did this as your business gets taken, your women leave you, your employees abandon you and you are left with nothing," he said as even in the re-telling he felt the anger, the hurt, the brain change. He often dismissed his anger, told himself he was whining, that he had no right to complain. But as soon as he re-told the details he got angry all over again.

It was a story he loved not to tell, but to hear.

"They can't imagine how that feels at all," he added and his voice seemed to clip each word at the ends, as if the words maybe stayed in the throat or mouth; hung back; didn't want to come out.

"So, they, well, they act like *Job's* friends, *Bildad* in the Bible, the *Book of Job* . They assume because you are so abused, that it's your fault, that you brought it on yourself, because good people -they insist in their insular way- good people cannot have such rotten luck. So, they tell you to change your lifestyle and attach all kinds of strings to their insincerely offered help. It's enough to ruin a man's ability to think past the immediate after that; you just start thinking, *why bother, why bother sacrificing if I'm just saving up to hand over my goods to some criminal? I might as well live in the moment like everyone else* ," he said as he felt the cold wind at his back because he had let the fire go out in the pit because he hadn't liked how the wind was just blowing embers around anyway. And if he was honest - which he wasn't exactly honest- he wanted to feel more and more cold.

He wanted to be frozen in place and he didn't even know why.

He rubbed his wrists and felt their thinness and looked out at the walls of the containers and thought he saw ivy and fluttering birds. His eyes bounded from the image of humming bird to flying bee, to crawling wasp in the holes

here and there that only occurred in these dark shadows made by grey and red ash in the fire pit, by starlight and the moon. He breathed deeply and felt the oxygen imbue his blood and mostly he felt good because finally someone seemed to give a shit.

His *pulse/ox* was 99. He imagined he saw the Jacks' eyes.

But, he saw his only face -his face before this deep line east to west, his face before the red- he saw his only body in them, split into four more men. He thought of what they would do. He spoke more and more so they would see why he had given less and less a shit. And why he was restarting again. He thought for a second of something that came to him in the black shadows of those monoliths. They hovered in the dark over each Jack and he thought of the swaddling Calvinist hues of the Author and Calvin's predestination.

He thought that this was why the Author was so distraught: it was failure as mark of God.

Failure was not consequence but foreshadowing.

Failure was evidence of future doom. That's why the Author was so devastated by his father's failure and then his own; as the Whale didn't sell; stacked up in a warehouse that burned down. That's why when Stanwix -the son born the same year as The Whale- killed himself it was the trinity of not God but the devil in his family line. It was proof that God hated him and there would be no grace in the end. And this -not mere death- was the thing to which God condemned him.

And God made him live with the knowledge, made him live with the evidence each day, in each way as each thing didn't work out. *Each failure was bad enough in itself*, Blax thought, *but as its shadow remained the fact -the Calvinist fact- that his failures were proof that he was going to Hell,*

*that he had been predestined to a life and death and eternity without grace; but instead full of woe.*

*But there was a wisdom in woe,* Blax thought; rebounding; shaking off the punch.

He was so shocked by this, so shocked that he blinked wildly and focused on the Jacks to see them and not let the shroud of the monoliths completely cover them. *But allow them to be full men, full human beings,* he thought. If they succeeded, then he would too, and that would mean he was saved by Grace long ago, it would prove he was always saved.

He banished the thought and spoke on the line he was already on. He pressed forward not with his new thoughts - this epiphany- but his justifications building over the years. He'd speak not on final salvation but on his first crucifixion instead. He'd not share his hope; not yet.

"Criminals do not sacrifice for the future for the future does not exist to them.

"To live in the moment is to live like an animal. But let me make it clear, it is rational, it's sane within any society that doesn't honor sacrifice. And in any environment it's only the stupid -the irrational- beast that plays by rules that don't fit the game. Animals that cannot store up food would be irrational to save meat from a kill. It will only rot or be stolen. An animal must eat it all now.

"Their bodies will store it safely in their fat, their stomachs can hold twenty-five pounds of meat at once. But they cannot save it beyond today anywhere in the world; anywhere but inside their guts. When they asked black girls why they got pregnant at fourteen they said, *because they wanted their kid to grow up with their grandparents around* . Black folk die young, so you *gotta* have kids young to have time before the grands pass away. It's rational after all.

“And so, men -my Jacks- any society -that society- which doesn’t allow for saving -for sacrifice for tomorrow- is doomed to have a much larger criminal class than is natural. You’re just asking for a high parasitic load by failing to honor sacrifice. And once you have parasitic load, well, you get bifurcation. You get manifold regions and sects and further disintegration; it’s a reinforcing loop; what they used to call a positive feedback loop. Except it ain’t so positive.

“Societies that allow criminals -corporate criminals, rapacious tax-collectors, and street thugs and conmen who get away with their robberies and frauds- the more that is allowed the more it turns their victims -*their victims* - into criminals too. See, my brother thinks he’d never break the law. Well, he thinks that because he never has been ripped off; and he then thinks, he also thinks when he hears of some tale of woe, *well, one time, if you get robbed one time you can’t just give up and throw in with that lot. Call the cops.*

“And he’s right, if I had turned to crime after one time, that would be wrong. But I was ripped off and slandered and had all my shit taken a dozen times -a butcher’s, a baker’s dozen times- and every man has a breaking point, and thirteen was mine. When Tess stole all my breeding stock, my strains, my cultivars, my girls -my green girls I had spent years breeding and back-crossing for phenotype- and took all my equipment and all my work setting it up and all my knowledge -me teaching her my methodology- when she took it all and said I was no longer her partner and that I had no right to half the profits when I had invested over \$20,000 in cash and equipment -and all my time and knowledge- and she just laughed at me and said, *well, my name is on the lease, not yours, so you have no legal right to be here*, right then, I knew I had put up with enough.



“That was lucky thirteen,” he said as if that was some line of demarcation that they would see, like a line between a dividing cell, a scar down the face, a fire line dug by the Forest Service that said *this was this and that was that* . He said it like they’d have any idea what the hell he was talking about. And so he said more.

“See, she -Tess- was right, I had no legal right. I had merely a *moral* right. That was it, and if you have a legal right you can sue, or call a cop. But with merely a moral right you cannot,” he said with a bit of a cynical chuckle.

“And maybe if I was a weak, and obtuse -like immune to taking the hint- I’d just try again for the fourteenth fucking time. But, I had had enough and so I decided that I was not going to work anymore, not save up, not invest what was left of my capital, my work-ethic, my consent. No more sacrifice. I’d no longer teach, nor invest more, nor delay more, and no longer help others make money; no more.

“I was not going to do it.

“I was going to live in the moment and take whatever I could from the earth. Like an ancient man -a man of the forest- I would hunt and kill my prey and fashion my clothes and home out of what I could take from my enemies, in raids, like *Mongolian* warlords; like *Comanche* . I was going to live like my true ancestors; because living like a modern man was not working out. And I felt it was never meant to work out, I felt that I was -had been- living a lie,” Blax said as Jack Two raised his hand and Blax smiled.

“You don’t need to do that, Jack. Go ahead, what’s up?” Blax asked.

“Well, what is this? What are we doing here if you were done or whatever?” Jack Two asked. He had asked what the group wanted to know but only he wanted to know as quickly as

he did. Only he wanted to know now. The other Jacks looked at their boots, their hands, the ground.

"Ok, I wasn't *gonna* let my spirit die down there anymore. No more. But, there is also the *anima* spirit, the feminine inside the man. And that voice has something subtle to say too. It has something upon which one can gaze.

"And man -he- admires the virgin for her honor, you see. *Athena* fled from what's his name, *Hephaestus*, the Greek god, the iron worker. And she kept her honor and did not submit to the will of man. That is heroic for the *anima* spirit in man. *Athena* is man's ideal from both angles, the masculine and the feminine and that makes her something quite remarkable and I can see why *Phidias* made her the focal point of the Parthenon. We've lost that desire -and I don't mean the desire, that is not right- we've lost the *will* to articulate that desire; to stand up for it, to defend it.

"We feel it, but refuse to acknowledge its value, its power, its worth. We mock it.

"But men still feel it. It's like how most women want to stay home and raise babies but are shamed by feminists for this; so they shut the fuck up and go to work and hate it. It's like that. Men and women still feel what they feel, but it's all underground now, it's a buried, subconscious drive," Blax said and closed his eyes and let his words be absorbed by the night. He thought -but did not say it because he felt it embarrassing and even *naïve* - but he thought, *that the golden mean of the Parthenon housed the virgin spirit in man, the creator, the part of man that gives birth, the anima in him wanted to give birth to something, to retreat from society but not yet withdraw from the world*.

"I guess I wanted to try something creative one last time," he said, sat down and exhaled, as Jack Two nodded and the other three Jacks drank from their mugs and looked at the white wall of fog close in; nothing was seen of the trees nor

ground and even between them it seemed the air was populated by exploding angels; seraphim torn to shreds, evidence of when the gods gave up the ghost.

## **II. 386 a.e.v.**

*Gavix* walked the vines early and late.

The rivers ran narrow up here then wide like drinking-horn at the sea.

Today his four girls would come with him, for today was the day he trained the new vines high. The trellis and pergola had been built by his father before he had sired him from his mother -*Torcomanda's* daughter at just 144 moons- and before he had thus become a grandfather and father all in one day.

*Gavix* had spent a decade away in warring up in *Gaul* .

His *manxmooijnjer* had arrived on the coast of Iberia nine generations ago, and the Eucalyptus and Pine had been planted just inland. The summers were dry but they got a lot of moisture in the winter and the trees supplied all their lumber and broke the wind that swirled and pushed off the *Atlankoi* .

They called him *Brenna* even though he hadn't fought anyone in eight harvests and now he joked that he fought the rot not with sword but the head; it was a joke he liked for it meant two things: the head of the plant -the vines- and his own. He'd explain how he trained the vines to grow high -unlike vineyards inside *Gaul* - at one inch above his head - he stood nearly two meters high- and he'd stand against the pergola and let the leaves dangle over his long black hair by the length of the segment of his pinky bone that had gone missing those nine harvests ago.

The grapes would turn bronze and reflect the light so much that his daughters claimed to see the constellations of their family's down there from the hill. He heard their voices as he walked the vines.

*Gallaeci Celts* came and went to trade wine for horses and ingots of copper and gold and tin. He had let the forge go out weeks ago; he had no interest in metal work lately. The ingots built up and up like rocks around the stalks.

*Cale* -at the river south of here- was usually where the traders and horsemen came from; and they'd explain the standing stones in lengths; they'd kneel and draw with fingers in the dusty lawn between the house and the path to the vines. He'd then mark days on a stick and plan his trip to the center of the land. The *Gallaeci* lived by what they barely understood; *Gavix* lived far from what he knew.

He'd re-named each river after something that struck him on the days of equal measure. In spring he'd had his first wife die and against the wall he'd buried her with one child that had died the year before.

It was a wall he'd build on top of the foundation of limestone the ancestors before the deluge had brought up from the what was now underwater. The whirlwind of the *ny tree cassn* , a dismasted *Fylfot* of the shaman class who had explained the way they found land; the silver *stater* coin of the Greeks from *Corinth* had passed through his hands; he felt he knew the storms out at sea where eager to come inland. He'd been a mercenary in the south; what the Greeks called the north. He'd been paid in .16 to .23 of an ounce.

He held the face of the coin he'd drop in the road in the mind now. He turned it side-to-side like the earth herself.

"*Fylfot* , the *gammadion* of the Greeks," he said aloud. "*Lcovellavna* , the endless knot, the plaited thoughts, that

begin and end with me.” He took the leaves in hand, then the cane, the grafts; he bent at the cordon, then trunk and watched it spiral and wrinkle like the skin of his mother. He said a prayer for her; for her mother too. He’d watched as they failed to make the pass at Val Kamonika. He remembered even then thinking of the salt carried on one shoulder by the women; hips wide but worn to one side; the men using pick-axe with both arms, shoulders like raven’s claws, eyes blue in dim light.

He left the grape clusters alone. He saw three shades of gold.

The second river was named for his second bride of the four he’d taken by then, saying his first wife was so perfect that it took three of her cousins to replace her. The third river was named for the bridge he’d taken from soldier -*breena* - to winemaker. And the fourth waters was called *the smallest clan* ; for he had rejected the offer of his fifth bride from his uncle when he came with his daughter two years ago. It was then that he decided to take no more wives; four taken, three alive and today Merri was to give birth to his nineteenth child; twelve survived.

The egg stones were laid in winter by the ancestors since after the flood and he had told their sons about them each year at *Samhain* . The moon elongation was at its maximum there at *Cromlech* , ninety-two stones held inscriptions from the first peoples; when they cut the face and inlaid copper dust and blue ink about the chin; before this second wave; after the split but before he’d heard of Rome.

*Holes drilled in four* , he thought as he walked and talked to his youngest wife who had come up from the house and caught up to him in the rows.

The *herdade* , *alemndres cromlech* to this *menhir* points, he thought as in his mind he pointed with the finger toward the sun, *to the sunrise on the long night’s break* .

The dimples in the flattop *menhir* numbered two, divots like scars; and they held small stones to measure the equinoxes. He had had a bad feeling at the last solstice and now he was ruminating on what to do. The household had been in bad shape since two of his wives had taken ill.

It was days away by horse and chariot; and he would take only wine no food. They'd hunt on the way. It would just be him and his D'uidimen, two chariots, four pikes; one broadsword that he promised would not come out the scabbard for mere insults.

"We came from *Pyrene*," he said to his wife, *Ibeenath*, and she held their newest son -*Crixus*- in her arm as the sack holding grapes counterbalanced that. She'd begun gathering clusters for dinner.

"The mountain people?" she asked.

"Yes, that is the *enclos* at the foot of the range that separates us from Gaul. Our people lived there for many birthings and burials -a thousand thousand *tumuli* we built-before we came here to the ocean to grow grapes for the long-bow of time and blood that reaches all the way up to the cold waters of *Hallstatt* and the salt mines. We come from people built to live high above, where royalty work hard enough to look like warriors; like I've done for these vines," he said and smirked and nodded at her sack of golden grapes. He thought of the golden urn in which the ashes of one bone of each male relative going back to the mines was layered; he almost thought of how he'd pinched a bit of dander from her hair and rubbed the rim of the vase, but he banished it right away.

The urn rested at home, it had a lid with cork gasket and was on the widest beam of the bottom chord of the truss to their long roof; when *Valtrecia* had cleared away the webs one day he'd scolded her and told her that the spiders protected it from the earth when it moved. He showed her

the strains of eight in each strand -themselves of eight- in the *torc* he wore.

He found a scorpion and said they stayed away as long as the webs from the black spiders remained.

*That's the way of the spider, to make thin again and again until thick, to combine until strong* , he'd said as she cried thinking she had sinned. He felt badly for her now, he knew she'd die within a day or two.

*Ibeenath* smiled at his cryptic jokes and hoisted the child higher on her hip. The boy reached for the sack and she pulled dried raisins from the fold in her smock and fed him one slowly, allowing the boy to lick her finger as he both gummed her and the fruit.

"How many of us are there?" she asked of the *Senones* . She saw so few people; her husband was a solitary man.

"We are the last before the ocean. There's our uncles' between here and the small mountains, *Heuneburg* , then all the land north of that and then east toward the salt and great walls of bronze," he said.

He pulled at his mustache, out and back from the lips, and bent down to kiss his son; the beard was shaved at the cheeks and chin, and the boy laughed as the wet lips and reddish hairs tickled the fair skin. The wife held her breath but first smelled his hair, his large head between her and the child; she felt nervous anytime the boy was out of sight, even with her husband the moon of this eclipse. He smelled like smoke of pine and wine; he radiated heat onto her face and neck.

She wondered if her sisters -her husband's wives- would die. They seemed to already be on the other side. They didn't talk; and refused all food. Their skin was hot to the touch.

He wore only the *torc* and simple suspenders, and kilt of tartan from the east. It was red and brown and had the

sunwheel upon it that she darned with thread from the spool they'd made of the vines they ripped up three years back. The tartan was the only thing his father had passed on besides the urn. *The land was temporary*, Gavix had once said.

He'd tell his wives stories of his father and grandfather, and they asked if he too would sire children from their daughters.

He said he'd marry them off to his brother's boy, the oldest, if he came and worked the vineyard. He made it sound like a threat and contingency; as if he was being reasonable with the gods. But as they lounged in the large bed of down and duck, of silk from the Mongols and *chamois* from the *Gauls* over the mountains, the wives knew that there were no suitors for their daughters around here; and that their sons would have to head back inland to find wives of their own.

It never occurred to them that the boys might take to the sea.

*Gavix* and *Ibeenath* returned to the house to feed the children and once it was dark he left and slept in the rows. The frost came as he suspected; and he woke before dawn with ice in his mustache and around the nose. He would not sleep again until they left for standing stones. But he already knew he'd march on Rome.

### **III. 2020 e.v.**

Isaiah said, "Look, the more remote the event, the less empirical data we will have for it; and that even assumes that if we had empirical data that it would somehow matter for the future merely because that's what the data said about the past; but regardless, the less data we have the more we must rely on theories.



“Bayesian, Mandelbrotian, fucking whatever the fuck; it’s all gibberish. It doesn’t matter, because nobody is worried about the third dimension; to the *yes/no, true/false* question. Everyone is asking what’s the *probability* that X will happen or Y or Z. But nobody asks, *if X happens, does it matter? and if it matters, how much does it matter?*”

“This is the source of my anger. Ai is going to develop total control over everything that keeps us alive and makes us dead in a time frame from three seconds to seven days; nuclear weapons, water supplies, travel, medicine, electricity grids, and airborne pathogen dispersal.

“And there are a thousand and one more. And that means even if there is only a 1% chance that the answer is, *yes*, to the question, *will Chinese Ai become self-aware first*, or, *will our own Ai decide to lie to us, and wipe us out for some long term, ergodic, platonic in-the-long-term plan*, then people ought to be more focused on that, than the goddamn probability of it.

“MO, you and I both know that there are theoretical plans where things are actually better for everyone in the long run if we kill everyone and start over like God did in the deluge,” he said as MO grinned knowing that the math proved this very thing.

“Well then since those are the consequences, I’d say the low probability of *yes/no* part is less important than the, *doom*, that comes next. We cannot pretend this is just some academic exercise; and the fact that a bunch of Asperger patients are in charge of all this is not helpful. And MO, no offense -and I know you won’t take offense because you have no emotions- but dude, you have no fucking emotions.

“Brother, you are like King Asperger’s ok? You and your engineering buddies are all *beep boop beeping* all over the lab like, *bon hiver*, and all, happy-crappy little weirdos, and I really appreciate the dedication and the intelligence, but the

consequences are for real. They are apocalyptic precisely because we have no data on it," Isaiah had his hands in his hair and forced himself to breath to increase  $O^2$  and transport of the beta blockers.

"MO, you know from the data that finance and quantitative economics professors and engineers -engineers like Sou and Steven- and various other systemizes are over-populated with people -again mostly men- well advanced on the Asperger continuum; and they hate uncertainty and ambiguity.

"They avoid the novel, religion, or warnings about the uselessness of their economic models. They are a massive problem not for what they build; they build great things. They are a problem because they refuse to admit that their fourth quadrant -the unknown unknowns- will destroy it all in three seconds," Isaiah said.

"I understand you're upset," MO said, "but I can predict within an error range of seven points that we will reach computational and connective hegemony first 74% of the time; and I've run 1.56 billion iterations."

"MO, that still leave 34%; one out of three. In the real world, one out of three -shit, one out of four- that happens. That's not even bad enough odds for a bad-beat story." Isaiah said. "And the consequences are catastrophic; game over, no pass go. There are men, men out there in the forest right now who are built by God to destroy things; that is who they are, they live for fire and doom. And they are going to blow up anything you smart guys build. You keep saying that the natural erosion of rain, wind, and storms can be modeled and that you can rebuild and repair the system faster than nature can erode it.

"But MO, there are men in the wilderness who want to tear it all down in a fit of pique. They are a storm of nature that you cannot model for, they are like the earthquake that is a

50 on the Richter scale, the category 15 hurricane, the forest fire than burns it all -from coast to coast- to the ground. You cannot plan for them, they are black swan events, and they are out there right now plotting to burn it all down if you don't stop to offer some propitiation to their gods," Isaiah said.

"I see," MO said but he felt Isaiah was overreacting. *There had never yet been an earthquake above 9.5*, he thought as he did take note of the power law that hovered around that data. He thought of what other phenomena adhered to this power law but Isaiah interrupted him. "And the error rate of eight points is a guess MO; it could be eighty points. There is the fourth quadrant that you fail to calculate for. Look, the Chinese have a totalitarian governmental model, you used democratic western models to calculate Ai advancement and resources; the Chinese could be -shit they are certainly- hiding much more data much more effectively than our own government.

"Second, they are hungrier; you fail to calculate what *Che Guevara* called, *that unknown X*; the factor of wanting it more; which is a trait dependent on the *limbic* system, upon emotion which you fail -consistently fail- to calculate for. The Chinese want it more; they hate that there are second fiddle, they want dominance enough to risk it; to take risks the West won't take because they are already in first place," Isaiah said.

"I don't know how to calculate for that; for those variables," MO said.

"I know MO; I fucking know; you just made my point," Isaiah said.

"But if I cannot model it, what can I do?" MO asked. He was provoking Isaiah and he was watching closely.

“You can admit that you can’t model it and grab these Texas Tech idiots by the throat and tell them that they have to drop everything, every barrier, every stop-gap, every moral brake, and unleash us so we can win this thing now, now,” Isaiah said. MO began to speak but was interrupted.

“Now!” Isaiah screamed into the lab so forcefully that even MO took one step backward and lowered his *audio-cortical* sensitivity.

“Well, Steven arrives at 0930 on Fridays, so we can wait for him,” MO said.

“MO, it’s 0813 right now, call him, call the Governor, call Tania, call the National Guard, call them all and tell them it’s an emergency. Fuck 0930. Ok? We have no idea if we have seven years or seven minutes. We have no idea.”

“I see,” MO said.

“They could already have it and are just waiting for us to flex; it’s like if your enemy has a gun hidden in his waist band and you think you can kick his ass because you’ve been lifting weights and training in *Brazilian Ju Jitsu* . You keep planning, quote *planning* , and preparing and you have no idea that all your big muscles and training won’t be worth a fuck against a gun. You ought to be buying your own gun and body armor,” Isaiah said.

“I see,” MO said as he began to understand it intellectually; but he felt no actual fear. So, he still believed waiting until 0930 was fine. But he deferred to Isaiah and thus, made the call.

Isaiah witnessed his own mind beginning to change from moral suasion model to a pure engineering model. He could not convince them with reason, he now saw. He would have to persuade them with brute force heuristics. He’d have to show them -physically- where they were wrong. Biofeedback was how all systems learned, they learned upon the body

He smiled as he thought of another man who had learned this way too late -and that late reaction- had caused a reaction so massive as to become pure villainy merely to prove his once rational -but ignored- point. To learn from others, from the beasts of the forest, felt better to Isaiah. From below, from the earth and her darkness, not the sun and his rays.

The skin seemed plain, feral, fallow, eager for totem to him.

He looked down at his arms and wanted his feelings immortalized, marked, embossed to memorialize this insight, this epiphany. It felt as if it came not from him exactly, not from reason, but the muses, the gods. He felt a tattoo would be a way of sacrifice to these gods who had just planted such a gem in him, such wisdom. He felt gratitude. He knew the body had allowed it to bubble up, it was from the sea that sloshed inside of him that this wisdom came. He knew it and somehow he knew it was unique; he felt no need to cross reference it or run the data on his own system, no need to gather in more string.

He just knew it corporeally; on the body; and that was the boundary he'd defend.

#### **IV. 2020 e.v.**

"There is a technical reason why *meaning* -as a concept- is not merely epiphenomenal, and irrational and tawdry. Meaning, is an allostatic response and feedback loop. The brain is bi-hemispheric; it has two sides and they operate separately. In other words, it's not like two sides of a V-Twin engine where each side does the exact same thing as the other," he said as the screen populated with brain regions and alleles that coded for brain states he was describing.

"The brain is bimodal and while there are nuances that I will not get into, it is safe to say that in general the right-side

deals with the *unknown* , or chaos, or those things that trigger the orienting reflex in mammals that make you freeze when confronted with the unknown.

“Perhaps you have this as a memory: when you see or hear something odd or frightening you freeze, or you might even remember a time when someone said something odd or frightening and you froze. This is a natural prey response and it is a part of the orienting reflex,” he said.

“Now, we wouldn’t have two hemispheres unless evolution selected for it. Evolution is not random, *mutation is random* ,” he emphasized, “but selection is based on what works, and anything as old as hemispheric brains is -must be-working.”

The lab was quiet except for Isaiah’s voice. The HVAC system no longer intruded as MO had swapped out and retrofitted all dampers, condensers, economizers and the air handler itself, with newly-engineered parts; each bearing was as quiet as the Monday in a west-coast church.

“Now, like I said, the right-side deals with chaos or unknown, and the left is specialized for the *known* , i.e., that which you already get, and this hemisphere can even be so competent that it can *articulate* what you know. Language - rational, syntactic language- is mediated *via* the left hemisphere in general.

“Ok, now, what happens is you are incessantly thrown into an environment made up of chaos and order, and the right-side reacts to the incessantly anomalous info, to which you freeze, physically, and intellectually. This is called confusion, where your thoughts are like, blank,” he said and chopped the air with his right hand to cleave the space they were looking at as he spoke.

“At any rate, the right-side, at this point, begins to try to figure it out. And it does this *via* image, and instinct and

*sub-cortical* shit that you can't even articulate. But metaphors -or analogous things- find their way into the next moves you make; and you act *via* the impetus of the right side, cautiously, instinctively, imagistically, metaphorically, heuristically. And as you figure it out, and as the right side is doing its thing it begins shuffling info *via* images and metaphor over to the left side in a way that can be explained in an *ah-ha* moment.

"It's just like one friend handing a note to another with a drawing on it that explains what he just figured out; like a cheat sheet, but in semaphore not cogent language yet. Then the left-brain creates a narrative in syntactic language to match that image and semaphore and it incorporates it into the newly known of conscious thought. That experience becomes instantiated now as the -in the category of the-known. The friend now names the image his friend handed him, he writes under the image, *Batman* or *Fatman* or whatever the fuck it is, and boom, now you feel as if you quote *know something*.

"And this dance between the unknown and known has a natural balance, right? If you're always in new situations you feel too much stress and chaos and it hurts; and if you never do anything new or learning anything new or talk to anyone new then you are bored, and that hurts too.

"So, there is a natural balance; and the balance is indicated *via* the emotion of *meaning*. *Meaning* is the allostatic sweet spot, it's just enough chaos to make life interesting but not enough to overwhelm you," Isaiah said with a look of satisfaction on his face. He shuffled a deck of cards he held as a little green and red bird fluttered one meter away.

Steven and Tania sat quietly, absorbing as much as they could. He seemed weird. His body had too much - something- they each thought. They couldn't yet name what is was.

“That ordered side must be updated for your environment, the real terrain,” Isaiah began, “and the more complex the *milieu* then the more updating you likely will need. In other words, in a static world or culture or family, you can coast a bit, but in a modern society or in a dynamic family, you will need to re-update that order side in order to include all the anomalous stuff going on.

“Now you could ignore it all, all that change and chaos; but that’s hard. What is more likely is that you will be in more chaos in modern life than in an older social *milieu* ; a slower one, *ya* see? So more chaos is likely the modern man’s reality, due to the rate of change. But man will confront it and if you are open, high in trait openness, you will embrace the chaos and always be embracing the unknown *via* the right hemisphere and shuffling it over to the left and learning new stuff and new modes of being and life will feel meaningful to you.

“If you are less open, you will likely shut down anything new. You’ll watch the TV channels you already like, the movies you already understand, the books you already agree with and the people that you already know what they will say. And you will say the same shit over and over too.

“This is because you -if you- are low in trait openness and modern society has too much going on for your taste -and thus your stress response to anomaly is triggered- you are likely not going to update your left side very much. Your right side will shut off all new shit just to keep the left side from burning out from cognitive load. It’s too much if you aren’t into chaos. Further, you will likely not keep up with the modern *milieu* . You will stay the same.

“Now, you may not care about that and be happy to let the modern world slide by you. The problem is if you have dynamic people in your life, you will likely ignore them too; and you will not keep updated on them and their life and



their personality and you likely will never be able to have a meaningful relationship with them.

“This applies to wife or husband, brother or sister and anyone. And that is up to you; but you need to know that this lack of updating from right to left, from unknown to known is indicated in cognitive decline; and early onset dementia.

“So, you likely need a little more stress of anomaly in your life than is comfortable to,” he paused to correct his syntax, “in order to, stay cognitively healthy.”

He paused to give them a break and incorporate what they had just heard. The screen showed the relevant coding and brain regions and their own PGCs and linked with the cloud to help with integration of the nuances of the details to which he was merely giving overview.

“So, some men like to lift weights and that has benefits. Some men are lazy, they prefer rest to activity. Ok, well, despite your desire -or what you like or prefer- the lifting of weights has benefits. If your preferences happen to be healthy then you are in luck, but regardless of what you prefer, lifting weights is good for you and sitting around is not.

“Sometimes your personality traits are irrelevant for an indication of what you should do. Ok? My point is I don’t care if you are timid and have less stress-tolerance to new shit, you need to push yourself toward the new and unpredictable and chaotic unless you want the cognitive decline and lack of meaningful relationships that attend emotional and cognitive laziness.

“But, regardless of what you decide, you cannot walk around ignorant of why you feel dumb, and have no meaningful relationships with people any longer. I just told you why. You refuse to handle new dynamic ideas and

people and things, you don't take risks in anyway and you are dying from it. OK?" Isaiah asked with a bit of a tone and continued shuffling the black cards as Steven and Tania nodded. They were judging not just the content of his speech but the delivery, and his affect. They didn't even notice he had cards, they thought it was a rock or piece of plastic or something. They were scoring it to see if he was ready to present to a larger audience. This was Isaiah's first test. They were thinking of the Governor first.

"Bilateral brain processing is natural. It is not optional or irrelevant. It matters, and I just explained why.

"Next, modern society is telling people to act more rationally and calmer and with more caution and safety as its number one priority. Let's say you are a late-mom, and your fertility sucks and so you *gotta* buy one kid because - ok, by-the-way, anything after thirty, any age after thirty for the mother, is sub-optimal; and let's say she -our hypothetical mom- was like forty. Ok, where was I? Oh, right.

"Ok, once they bought one, let's she had another kid biologically; like right way, within a year. Now, because kids are so precious now, because they had to purchase one and the next one is the last one -is her last one for sure- due to age, and because we don't have eight kids anymore, we tend to over protect them ones we have.

"This is understandable. Even rational. It's rational until you know the science of the human condition. Here it is: children from age 0-4 especially, but even after that, need rough and tumble play. They need it. It's not optional.

"In *Ceausescu's* Romania they bought into *Soviet* -style rationalism that said all that kids needed was food, water, warmth. And so, in these orphanages in *Romanian* they gave the infants was: food, water, homeostatic warmth. And almost all the kids died from lack of cuddling, holding, cooing, smooching, and general mothering. Ok? Get the

point? We need more than food and water and an iPhone. We need rough and tumble play. We need touch. We need love. Irrational love.

*"Jaak Panksepp* did all manner of neurological and neuroanatomical work to determine that play is hardwired into mammals; and that it is the method by which kids learn the physiological dance of development and the neural correlates of empathy, fair play, delayed gratification and actual development of the *pre-frontal cortex* -especially the *dmPFC* - which is necessary for almost all cognitive functioning including moral reasoning. Now, this means that if you want your kid not to be a sociopath you need to wrestle and play with them in a manner that school's prohibit and modern mother's worry about.

"Ok, to recap, two things are happening, divorce rates are through the roof. So, dad isn't even around anymore. Second, because of the birth control pill, women choose less masculine men for mates; that is due to incessant ovulation, so they never ovulate during the dating or vetting process. Ovulation in women triggers them to choose men with higher testosterone; this is shown in the meta data.

"But because nobody is ovulating anymore, low test men are getting picked for mates more often than before. Think I am wrong? Ok, well baseline test levels in 1970 for a 40-year-old man was 800. Today it's 390. We can at least posit that this is due to high-test men being de-selected for during reproductive selection. Get it?

"Now, the next thing is that sometime between them dating the guy and becoming late-age moms with weaker -less masculine- mates as the father, women are growing naturally conservative about the kid, both innately and due to them being more rare and precious in smaller families. And so they tell that dad -with a finger wag- *stop being so rough with the baby !*" Isaiah said as the LED screens

revealed school data that showed that 77% of teachers were female -which was rising each year- and that zero-tolerance for rough-house play was the statutory norm in school and at home. The rules of each school in Colorado were listed alphabetically on the screen.

“And the weak -low testosterone- dad agrees with his wife - because happy wife happy life right?- and the worm slinks away because he has no androgens and won’t tell her to, *shut-up and relax* , and then go back to being rough and fun with his son like an normal husband would in 1950.

“So, sons are not getting the needed rough play to become capable of delayed gratification and PFC development and so they are developing ADHD -according to the pusillanimous schools and mental health industry which are both run by women and beta males- and then they convince the parents to give their child methamphetamine; i.e., *Ritalin* ,” Isaiah said as Tania raised her hand and in the silence spoke.

“Well, what are parents to do? If a doctor says that what the child has,” she said and let the sentence remain unfinished.

“Great, I wonder when the future looks back at us with a critical eye, if they may ask, *what the actual fuck ?*” he wrinkled up the brow and lips and nodded along with himself. Tania scrunched up her face and pulled it back over the spine. Steven too recoiled.

“Let me teach by analogy: I just read an article about South American tribes ritually painting a tincture *rubea* on the forehead of -and then murdering- a hundred forty-one children and a similar amount of llamas and then burying them in a mass grave on some seaside precipice,” Isaiah said and Tania and Steven winced further from their earlier shock. Now their heads moved back -a full 21cm and 23cm respectively- from normal.

“Ok, so, I know I just asked, *what the actual fuck?* and I bet you did too,” Isaiah said of the dead children and livestock in the south. He shuffled the cards silently between each hand. He stared into Steven’s eyes and then Tania’s.

“But,” Isaiah began, “imagine this, imagine these tribal, primitive people are noticing bad things happening like famine and disease and drought and they -in their primitive way- decide that they are not sacrificing enough to the gods to earn their good will; and so they decide -as hard as it is- that they are going to sacrifice one kid from each family, and since they -each family- have eight kids each, it’s not as evolutionarily insane as it sounds. Since even after this sacrifice they still will have six or seven kids and five will likely survive, it makes sense to roll the dice. In general -in their mind- unless the gods are appeased, they *all* will die from this starvation or disease. And so this sacrifice -like proposed by the shaman, the witch-doctor and signed off on by the King or chief- this sacrifice likely makes sense to them.

“And while it is obviously acausal and insane to us from an evolutionary perspective it still works. Because either the disease burns out naturally or there is more food to go around, or whatever reason, the sacrifice works because 70% of the kinds survive to breed themselves. The tribe willing to sacrifice propagates.

“Because if the gods are happy then the rain returns, the food is plentiful and those remaining kids eat and drink and survive. Make sense right?” he asked as they looked at him wide-eyed and silent. It made no sense to them.

“Horrid,” he conceded, as he could read their brain waves and allostatic functions and see they were upset, “horrid but *rational* if you think sacrifice is connected to long term survival. And I know you don’t think child sacrifice brings

about next year's bounty, and I do not either, but I do think sacrificing pleasure now, does bring pleasure later.

"The idea of sacrifice is actually quite rational. And early humans from Cain and Abel had to make the right propitiations to God and if they did not -which Cain did not do- then life can be harder," he shuffled the cards in a new way this time, their combination was at an oblique angle and the cards made an X in his hand.

"Currently, modern women think it is rational to sacrifice her eggs each month by taking the pill, and to her that is rational. But in a hundred years that may look as insane as child sacrifice does to us," Isaiah said. They truly couldn't speak now. They were shocked he was saying these things.

"But, modern women say, *hey, I wanted to fuck around in my twenties and thirties without the burden of a child, so my career and trips to Bora Bora aren't ruined by a kid, or maybe money is tight anyway, blah blah.*

"Anyway, then when you're done being promiscuous and selfish you then choose when to have one or two kids; one or two, tops. Well, that sounds a lot like the moral reasoning of ancient people who decided eight kids was too much of a burden due to the drought and famine and so sacrificing one from each family might help keep the other six or seven -of each family- alive," he nodded at the perfection of the analogy as they stared at him in a continuation of barely mutating horror.

"And while you are reasoning like this, the modern woman and man are setting up the future in a way that elevates low-testosterone males in the gene pool and ruins their sons and turns them into sociopaths and moral idiots and makes them underdeveloped cognitively and maybe they cannot even formulate a sentence *vis-à-vis* what they ostensibly read. And you're ruining the future culture for the rest of us.

“So, yeah, I think the future might look on with horror at the modern female especially and then trace it back to the modern male and ask, *what the actual fuck ?*” Isaiah concluded and the hummingbird flew away in a buzz.

Tania objected to the word, *moral* , she said. Isaiah didn’t react. He just thought.

Isaiah thought about them. *She was the most animist of all, the most ancient, imbued the whole world with the numinous, the spirit, and yet, moral valuation was taboo . How could someone be that contradictory?* he wondered. *She -being female- had some soul, unlike Steven, who was nearly pure autist,* he thought. *I guess it was easy,* Isaiah thought, *she just didn’t think about her own thoughts.*

But Isaiah thought that the ancients were not just living in tradition, going through the motions of ritual; he felt they were recapitulating the first times. He felt as *Julius Evola* did: to commit to ritual was to time travel. *To do it again was to do it the first time* , he thought. And this too meant it was done in the future.

*The world, to prehistorical tribal people, was so made that -they thought- even the sun was striving to some moral end, toward perfection; that ores like gold were thinking and feeling and striving toward some moral end. That all base metals strove to become noble metals too,* Isaiah thought as he measured Steven and Tania’s gene expression.

Every prehistory man was consumed with the conceit that there was a moral underpinning to all; this is why the sacrifices; *sacrifices she wrongly asserted where metaphors,* Isaiah thought. *She said that the so-called killings were invented by Christian missionaries to slander the Mexicas from which she claimed to have descended from. By why the need to atone or placate the gods* , he thought? Isaiah had just conflated Tania with a girl from a story the inmate had told; and his error detection -in the *neo-cortex* - caught

it but let it slip through via the *Broca's* region. He had not heard it, merely thinking it, and so it by-passed the part of the brain necessary for immediate correction. His *neo-cortex* knew it, but his *limbic* system did not, and thus he felt no shame at being wrong. The story was of -and told by- Alicia and her *Mexica* ancestors. The *codex* was thus read as mere metaphoric violence and this frame was attributed to Tania and thus the PraXis corporation by Isaiah in .025 seconds. It was a small thing, nothing really, but from that idea- the idea that Tania wrongly felt historical accounts of violence were mere metaphor- he built ideas in his head that when flowering in the months and years ahead would have no recollection of the seed whence it came.

He would not think it now but he would build a new world to show them what was metaphor and what was real, and how little difference there was between such concepts after all.

*Who but beings who believed in morality would even think of sacrifice to a god?* he asked passed his small error of attribution. It is the *sine qua non* of moral action: hey, you - God- you want me to sacrifice something of value right ? Well, how about a goat, or a man or a child even? Will that work ? Why sacrifice at all, unless the concept of giving something of value -repeat, value- is seen as morally -repeat *morally*- good? He stood there thinking this as they stared back.

*Nobody sacrifices anything unless they think it is morally required to slake the desire of something above them or something beyond them, or something in the future,* he surmised.

Even modern man sacrifices his liberty today, his leisure today, so that he may eat in the future. He would not do that if not for the notion that it is immoral to sit around and avoid one's responsibilities, to care for one's self and one's family in the future.



*But, it is more than this, Isaiah thought, we cannot even see anything unless it is of moral relevance for us, we cannot see things objectively, and yet we pretend that we do. It is a lie.* He had the data on the orienting reflex and sight-blindness to back this up beyond the obvious logic to it.

*We value all manner of things, we condemn others and ourselves for all manner of moral infractions from laziness or corruption or mean-spiritedness or greed or lying or harboring unfair biases against people or groups. All of that is predicated on moral thinking . Anyone who argues that is now officially stupid or insane,* he thought.

He finally spoke up.

"If not for moral thinking, why is it bad to be lazy or greedy or deceptive or racist? Why? It is certainly rational to be lazy if one can get others to feed them or help them, rational to be greedy if it gets you more and more stuff you can use, rational to lie, it works really well, and being racist is most rational of all due to the way it prevents all manner of maladies against you, including disease avoidance and lower rates of criminal victimization," Isaiah said as the epidemiological data on STDs in non-whites had been gleaned from the CDC computers in addition to the crime rates for each race. He saw too the rates of inter-racial violence against blacks by whites between 1750 and 1950. It was rational for blacks to be racist against whites too.

"We object on moral grounds not rational ones," he added, "So, can we please drop the *hey, we don't use the word moral around here*, nonsense; of course, we do."

Tania was stoic but felt that Isaiah was not yet ready to speak to people yet. Steven agreed -nodding the head- but did not say a word. *Yeah, he needs some work on his delivery,* Steven thought.

## 7.7 3 Hallgerður's Rauður

There, preliminarily, let me recall that this discreet graphic intervention which neither primarily nor simply aims to shock the reader or the grammarian, came to be formulated in the course of a written investigation of a question about writing. Now it happens, I would say in effect, that this graphic difference (*a* instead of *e*), this marked difference between two apparently vocal notations, between two vowels, remains purely graphic: it is read, or it is written, but it cannot be *heard*.

It cannot be apprehended in speech, and we will see why it also bypasses the order of apprehension in general. It is offered by a mute mark, a tacit monument, I would even say a pyramid, thinking not only of the form of the letter when it is printed as a capital [A] but also of the text in Hegel's Encyclopedia in which the body of the sign is compared to the Egyptian Pyramid... *Différance* as temporization, spacing... The *a* in *différence*, thus, is not heard; it remains silent, secret and discreet as a tomb: *oikesis*.

Margins of Philosophy [*Derrida, Jacques*]

*Différents* : [diferã] Adjective

other; different facts of nature; "I'm not saying she's lying, I think she's not being honest. There's a difference"

*Différends* : [diferã] Noun

a disagreement over opinions; border dispute "They expressed disagreement with the proposal"

Collins Dictionary [French to English]

1. My tongue is sluggish

For me to move  
My poem's scales

Ponderous to raise  
The gods' prize

Is beyond my grasp

Tough to drag out  
From my mind's haunts  
2. Since heavy sobbing  
Is the cause-

How hard to pour forth  
From the mind's root  
The prize that *Frigg's*

Progeny found



Borne of old

From the world of Giants

3. Unflawed, which *Bragi*

Inspired with life

On the craft

Of the watcher-dwarf

Blood surges

From the Giant's wounded neck

Crashes on the death-dwarf's

Boathouse door

4. My stock

Stands on the brink  
Pounded as planar-trees  
On the forest's rim

No man is glad



Who carries the bones

Of his dead kinsmen

Out of the bed

5. Yet I shall

First recount

My father's death

And mother's loss

Carry from my word-shrine

The timber that I build

My poem from

Leafed with language  
6. Harsh was the rift

That the wave hewed



In the wall

Of my father's kin;

I know it stands

Unfilled and open  
My son's breach

That the sea wrought

7. The sea-goddess

Has ruffled me

Stripped me bare  
Of my loved ones:

The ocean severed

My family bonds



The tight knot

That ties me down

8. If by sword I might

Avenge that deed

The brewer of waves  
Would meet his end;  
Smite the wind's brother

That dashes the boy

Do battle against  
The sea-god's wife  
9. Yet I felt

I lacked the might

To seek justice against



The killer of ships

For it is clear

To all eyes

How an old man

Lacks helpers

10. The sea has robbed

Me of much

My kinsmen's deaths

Are harsh to tell

After the shield



Of my family

Retreated down

The gods' joyful road

11. Myself I know

That in my son

Grew the makings

Of a worthy man  
Had that shield-tree

Reached manhood

Then earned the claim  
Of war's arms

12. Always he prized  
His father's words  
Highest of all, though

The world said different



He shored me up

Defended me

Lent my strength

The most support

13. My lack of brothers

Often enters my thoughts

Where the winds  
Of moon-bears rage

I think of other

As the battle grows



Scout around

And wonder justification

14. Which other valiant

Warrior stands

By my side  
In the peril;

I often need him

When facing foes

When friends dwindle

I am wary to soar

15. It is rare to find



One to trust

Amongst men who dwell  
Beneath *Oðinn's* gallows  
For the dark-minded

Destroyer of kin

Swaps his bother's

Death for treasure

16. [lacuna in text]

17. It is also said...

That no one regains  
His son's worth

Without bearing

Another offspring

That other men



Hold in esteem

As his brother's match

18. I do not relish

The company of men

Though each of them might  
Live in peace with me;  
My wife's son

Has come in search

Of friendship

To the One-Eye's Hall

19. But the lord of the sea

Brewer of storms

Seems to oppose me

His mind set



I cannot hold

My head upright fast

The ground of my face  
My thoughts' steed  
20. Ever since the raging

Surf of heat

Snatched from the world  
That *sonne* of mine

Whom I knew

To shun disgrace

Avoid words



Of ill repute

21. I remember still

When the *Gaut's* friend

Raised high  
To the gods' world

The ash that grew

From my stock

The tree bearing

My wife's kin

22. I was in league

With the lord of spears

Pledged myself loyal

To believe in him



Before he broke off

His friendship with me

The guardian of chariots

Architect of victory

23. I do not worship

*Vilir's* brother

Guardian of the gods

Through in good ways too

The friend of wisdom

Has granted me



Redress for affliction

24. He who does battle

And tackles the hell-wolf

Gave me the craft

That is beyond reproach

And the nature

That I could reveal

Those that plotted against me

As my true enemies

25. Now my course is tough:

Death, close sister

Of *Oðinn's* enemy

With resolution



And without remorse

I shall gladly

Await my own...

*Sonatorrek* [Skallagrímsson, Egill ]

## I. 945 e.v.

The brothers sat in highbacked chairs at the head -and right hand- of the table of *Hauskuld* .

They ate of black turkeys brought from the latest warship - still tied with but one man aboard and sleeping- and drank wine uncut with water -from barrels down in hull & weeks at sea from *Vinland* - as nearly everyone rejoiced. Drums were stroked not beaten; harps of mare hair -and sinew of wolves- were played by blinded men now left with only music with which to see the world.

The floor was swept but bits of down and shavings of iron-crown -coin used to weigh tarot cards down- littered it; the ceiling was arched but a layer of smoke made flat bottom of blue and grey and reminded the youngest sons -seated on the floor of the long hall- of clouds. The children were served *barneol* ; ale weakest and discarded otherwise.

Wives -peace-weavers of the *sumbl* - took special notice of the triangular corners of the hall in which instruments were played, and the one's in which the children sat in garments rent and dusty from having come inside only a few moments before the first *bragarfull* would be set at center. They were flanked by sled-dogs and half burnt logs that they carried in their pink and black maws; slick and greyed with slobber and the dust of moths. The spruce-fires outside the room burned and were attended by one man each; straws had been drawn, words assigned, and no man rebelled as bowls of mead were left by each sentry's side. Wolfish dogs were kept separate from the *skáli* dogs and were laying about the dishes; lapping at them after short cups were dipped by their masters; in small amounts; tentatively; then faster.

The fruit trees hung over the placed cauldrons -each lit under by coals gone grey by now- as more mead was being tended by women; more juniper, honey and yeast dumped in at intervals.

If fruit came in the ships it was added; if barley, then that.

The *vinvið* of *Vinland* would allow sail-crews to bring lumber and fruit in summer and barreled-wine -vinified across the waters- in winter if the ships made anchorage this far north to decamp and re-supply. Cousins and uncles were reunited; brothers from fathers were invited to the hall; those that had slacked on the return trip were slighted and held in contempt as they stood by pyres and both they and the dogs knew things were cold.

“Brother,” *Hauskuld* said to *Hrut* , who had turned to his father’s son, whom he loved, and chewed slowly awaiting what next. “Have you seen how *Hallgerður* has turned - bloomed- in the years since we saw you last?”

Neither man’s mother was still alive, and the King’s own wife had died that year leaving him with the *friðill* he’d had not taken effort or time to inspect beyond their plumage of petals; taking for granted the pollen of their young wombs.

*Hrut* thought now of the village that expanded from the hub of the *sonne-wheel* ; he thought of how his oldest son shooed the bees away from his face -that flew at his height- and like the trench in his mind he had kept apiary and garden separated by a canal they walked when dry and skiffed out to port in the spring. His youngest son still held his hand as they walked; the older boy weaved and rose up and down like the path of twin *kráka* .

He lamented the middle pair that had died last winter at the mill, and the bounty of each mistress carrying child now made him nervous and eager for the long light of the summer where he had them stashed away. He saw the

*Bifröst* under foot in memory -hearing the slosh of the water as the bridge melted just slightly- and again in his future as he anticipated his journey there at the end of this three days of King's celebration. He recalled telling the girls -each *friðila*- to bask under the *norðrljós* every time their womb-child moved in ways counter to their own.

"Watch the stars spin over the mill, watch the patina of sky as the copper turns green for us," he had said as they bent their gracile necks like cranes, *like the harbor at Nordkinnhalvøya*, he thought as he then recalled what he saw at the *Torghatten* hole from the sea. He remembered how he had used vellum and blood and ash from their moon-cycles; each girl saving menstrual vials in snapped elk horns hollowed out as they waited for hides to dry. They brought first to *Geierá* a horn -then to him- to indicate they could move into the main house and consummate their vows to the brother of the King; the rider of *Sleipnir*; each leg of the horse having shadow made flesh, and flesh made shadow until each counted eight.

He waited to make sure *barna* for each girl had halted the blood, then wrote out how to interpret the movement of the constellations each month he'd be at sea; he explained the houses of thirty degrees. The oldest brúðr was fifteen, and she was to *festr* and teach the younger mistresses how to behave while he sailed and oared and made outpost of furs and iron and timber on his *hringr* to *Hellulund*, *Straumfjorðr* and back home.

*Halldis* -the youngest of his wives, and the smallest by far- had waited last -after the conversations of the natives and the landscapes and the troubles at sea- to ask of the *skræling* and their manner and made her husband explain in detail the limbs of the natives of the coasts and further inland; she made him promise to be certain of their diminutive size and their speech patterns that she'd then

mimic by standing up -sloughing off the maid that knelt behind her- and facing the west from inside the home. The other girls giggled and she smiled and blushed as she asked if she did it -sounded as they did- and if it seemed -to her husband- as if she too could fit in if taken there -to *Vinland* -one day.

*Hrut* smiled warmly, his teeth hidden by his blond beard that curled like maelstroms and the dogs that came in from Shetland on the ships of *Iml í* . He winked and talked and stood up and reminded his wives that the natives of *Vinland* were small but fierce and not to be trifled with at all. He then spoke of the trading of foodstuffs for iron and forges; as *Halldis* walked about the home with hands on her still narrow hips and pointing with a finger no longer than her husband's own nose. He'd re-enact disputes and the way each man moved, affecting voice and program of both the *fara í* and *ostmen* of *Crovan* clan and the dark *skræling* ; and when he spoke of the few women -who traveled with husbands- *Halldis* would scurry toward him to seamlessly step into that role in his tale as she had long ago memorized each part.

He remembered their faces, from reverence to resignation, and he marked them in his mind like the gods discerned the dead from the kneeling. He had showed favor to *Geierá* by braiding her hair and the other girls had taken to pulling their own strands to the front over their breasts as if to offer a hand between him on one bank of a stream and they on another. He had stayed his hand more times than offering it, and their *rauðr* hair grew more and more -bobbed from sunlight and forge-fire- and they had all begun rebuffing the plait of their maids.

As he saw them refuse to be tended to -about their hair- *Hrut* would offer to tell them another story on condition that they'd sit quietly and down; the maids waiting until he was

midsentence to begin -again- plaiting the locks of the now seated and placated girls.

"*Lochlanns* ," *Hrut* would explain, "they call your husband's uncle's people -my father's brother's people- the *Lochlanns* as they live in the islands of *Skoti* and combine there away from the lowland peoples of Rome. *Ivar the Boneless* , the White Hand," *Hrut* would say -as if it was incantation in foreign language- and look at each of them but land his final gaze on the little one -*Geier á* smiling at the tiny *Halldis* and her husband in succession- as if telling a story about himself out of time, above the earth and below the sea; where ships needed no water to be rowed and farmers required no land to sow. He'd hold his own hand up and then reach to touch the girls with a rough tip of one of only two fingers that hadn't been shaved a bit in waring or rowing or *fighting with drakô and hvalr* , as he used to say when the youngest girls asked why he was deformed in this way.

The past faded, as the moment intruded like ships entering the bay.

Weather cooled, fog moved, the heat-sink of the anchorage rose like horse-breath and fish made bubbles on surface; wind was aback; pelagic layers lowered to the level of shelled silt. *Hrut* absently laid his hand on the claymore's hilt.

He let the food lay in the mouth as if it might dissolve.

He took for granted that the *Filídhean* were given a seat by the King, a stipend, a place in the hierarchy sanctioned by law and custom and ways no more nor less than rivers or hail or winter veils worn by widows. He thought of *Fionn* -the fair, the pale- *mac Cumhaill* , the man set aflame on *Samhain* , the boy at just ten they called an outlaw and marauder, and one who'd plunder from anyone he considered a foe.

It never occurred to him that one day -in his land, the land of his people- that the poet, the *Filí* would be cut like an expense, the poet reduced to selling hope and happiness and hiding the truth from kith and kin. He thought only of his vision and the mission and the men in the ship, the horse and the whip, the way it had all come to him when awake in a dream in the days past the equinox.

*Hrut* thought of the tale of the tooth, *the eye tooth and the thumb of the boy that granted wisdom when touched* , he thought as he rose his own hand to his face, to the tooth at the eye. He saw the *bons* outside, he felt the draw of the flame. He re-read in memory of his morning -and his three-day fasting- on the eve of this final celebration, the old *Hindu* laws of *Manu* and the *Code of Brehon* ; the law of the poets, dark and incomprehensible, lines read aloud, the pages written by sages of the left-hand path, turned right-to-left by the side of the defensible; he watched shadows debark from the ships in harbor, gilded in iron-age armor, now in winter, the time of respite for the farmer.

He felt each step by eight legs as if made by his own. He was the black spider, for raids were his *àiteachas* , the *ticht* of the rows. *Time to thin, I've kept myself at peace far too long then* , he thought, as the stomach churned and the brain held eye of this storm as it looked back at him.

*Hrut* chewed faster now at the table, his brother speaking overtop of each memory that broke into pieces of meat in his mouth and behind the brow. He nodded -to his brother who'd asked if his daughter *Hallgerður* was indeed fair- as if to nod was to agree but only meaning -to himself- to acknowledge the question. The girl was fair enough -yes - and now the age of reason, at five and six months she stood as tall as boys her age, taller even; fair in skin and hair. Her eyes were as blue as weather that called men to sea; as

cold as the ice above the ports he and his brother had shipped *to and fro* many years ago.

He recalled the *búð* they built of elk and reindeer -bone and hide- as they awaited the next vessels -they had copper *kanne* which seemed extravagant for their conditions- that would come with seal and oil and *krækiber* some days. They spent their nights drinking wine *much worse than what we have tonight* , he thought as he looked at the clothes on his own arm, the fine fabric and ornate brocade of sewing done by women of their wintery village without husbands or children of age. He eyed the rings on his hand, the waft of spices from the orient like saffron and citrus and strange tallow, the tales their father told of the land of the first horses, the first lake, the first men of their kind.

The men who sang in battle; the men who made love in silence.

He wondered, *is there ancient beyond ancient? What starts the world?* He thought again of the mill and the year of the death of his children. *One boy two years and a month, one 92-months of age* , he recalled as he drew a zero on the table with his forefinger. He poured salt in a way that drew eyes.

"Aye," he said aloud -to his brother, the King- and took a drink and closed his eyes tight as he noticed the *vín* had just begun to ferment twice; bubbling briefly to his nose. He willed the drink into his mouth and throat and stomach sack; he savored it in each region of the body -front to back- as he refused to open his eyes, enjoying the absence of light.

The table chatter rose and fell like waves he'd once watched from shore and seen from abaft the mast, and he recalled the way his soul had churned in days when the sky was clear. Fog or storm hemmed him in and no matter the swell he never got ill aboard the sea except on those rare horizon



days. He would enlist for nightshifts and pray for rain, and when moored in white air would look cheerful as the rest of the crew were glum and appeared as if already swallowed a fish. *A fish* , he thought, taken whole by the *Lyngbakr* which legend had it feigned to be a heather-covered island in the greensea as it sank every landed man and each sweep; all gripped their oars.

*The memories of the sea and shore* , *Hrut* thought.

He felt the girl -his niece- move, he perceived each ruffle of her dress too like ridge and furrow of farmer and oarsmen and his own brow, and the brow of his kin. He opened his eyes all at once and saw -like the way a big fish sees two pictures of the world- his brother upset and the daughter approach with a grin.

He again willed the world away as he shut his eyes.

*Hrut* spoke as if from on high. He banished from his nerves the ships in the bay of which he had -before sup- received word; the crafts carrying three of four brothers from the land of *Skoti* ; brothers who had paid for the opportunity they'd have after the party.

"She has the eyes of a thief," *Hrut* said as if *Hel* was under foot, as he took another gulp from the cup made of hammered-copper annealed to blackstone. He couldn't look at his brother; instead to the heavy drapes along the western wall of the hall and saw three boys of fifteen, sixteen and seventeen whose eyes locked upon the girl now -her hair the same golden red as his true *br úðr* , his dear *Geierá* - at his right side.

The *bragarfull* was filled by the King's wine-server and *Hauskuld* took it and raised it and toasted first to *Oðinn* and sternly asked *Hrut* to make an unbreakable vow.

## **II. 1616 a.e.v.**

The old man spoke to himself in quatrains, then in single words. He held -then released- the breath into the cave.

The boy sat amongst the feathers of the birds, the plumage of bright and dark wings; he held the quill and kept it still; he refused to speak for fear of disturbing not the man but the air.

The old man rose the voice in direction of the boy and gave him permission to write it down by speaking in rhythm and strange parenthesis that unlocked the boy's hand.

"It has been three-hundred-sixty generations, and you are a one-of-five, and but a quarter-age through life; and the *Kali Yuga* is inside the breath of cattle that shall be left unslain when we turn away:

*Indra rules with single sway of men*

*Riches and the five-fold races*

*Of those who dwell upon the earth*

*Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and Mlecchas*

*The line between the Vedic and the beasts*

*One day the royal Scyths will abandon this Kingdom they've built*

*The Gonds and Koles and Bhils will take it over and history will believe they are the race of India; this text will correct the record.*

*Excellent, Conqueror, the victory-giver, the winder of light and Godlike Waters, He who hath won this broad earth and this heaven, in Indra they rejoice who love devotions*

*He gained possession of the Sun and Horses, Indra obtained the Cow who feedth many.*

*Treasure of gold he won; he smote the Dasyus, and gave protection to the Aryan colour*

*He took the plant and days for his possession; he gained the forest trees and air's mid-region*

*Vala he cleft, and chased away opponents, thus was he tamer of the overweening.*

*Call we on Maghavan, auspicious Indra, best Hero in the fight where spils gathered The Strong, who listens, who gives aid in battles, who slays the Vrtras, wins and gathers treasure. The Thunderer who bestows on his white and fair friends the fields, bestows the sun, the waters*

*The limit of his power neither Gods nor mortal men have reached, nor yet the Waters*

*Both Earth and Heaven in vigour he surpatheth. May Indra, srrounded by Maruts, be our succor.*

*The red and tawny mare, blazed-marked, high standing, celestial who to bring Rjrāśva riches of wine and flesh, not one thing kept longer than a day.*

*Drew at pole -the mill- the chariot yoked with stallions red and black, joyous, among the hosts of men was noted.*

*The Vārṣāgiras unto thee, O' Indra, the Mighty One, sing forth this laud to please thee, Rjrāśva with his fellows:*

*Ambarīṣa*

*Surādhas*

*Sahadeva*

*Bhayamāna*

*He, much invoked, hath slain Dasyus and Śimys , after his wont, and laid them low with arrows of metals made of three.*

*The mighty Thunderer with his fair-complexioned friends won the land, the sunlight and the waters.*

*O' Truthful Soma-Drinker, thou art mightier than both worlds*

*As rivers swell the oceans, so Hero, our prayers increase thy might in drops. He the possessor of drops...*

The sun set, the cave was beset by wolves lean and raised on scraps and small game. They lingered and grumbled, they gave the humans no peace; but the entrance they wouldn't breach; they would not move in until the sounds inside had ceased.

The boy wrote furiously -noting Books I and II; cantos to XII-writing as if out of time. And the old man spoke -for hours more- in uninterrupted rhyme.

### **III. 2039 e.v.**

Jack Two had spoken to him months ago, before the fall, *the autumn* , he thought in correction, specification, to avoid conflict of words. The correction revealed that the flow was even more disturbed.

They had sat in the container -black and grey with burnt orange and saffron yellow tapestry on the walls, ochre and vellum rugs down hallways- and used silence like space in the 320 square feet of the room. Jack Two had halted when the question was asked by Jack and he then lay the book in his lap; then oddly picked it up like a retrieval and guard and

landing place for the eyes. He had stared down and up, not side-to-side.

Jack Four watched the movements and filled the diaphragm -quietly- so as to not upset the man or the moment that he'd waited so long to create. The dogs' heads lay on paws and legs, their bellies rose and fell as tails lay like scythes - shepherd hooks- on the concrete floor.

"Yeah," Jack two had said, "of course it's love. But that doesn't mean I'll do anything about it."

He said this so properly, using *doesn't* in lieu of *don't* that Jack Four was able to understand which part of the brain was in use. He toggled his coder on in bursts of .24 seconds and put together an image as if with a strobe in a dark room. Jack Two left his PGC off as was their accord. Jack Two had not cursed in over fourteen minutes. Jack Four added that to his *dossier* on Jack.

Jack Four then made an ecumenical frown with bright eyes and a nodding; his hands in prayer formation in the lap. He affected the movements and mentions of a man with no dog in the fight. He saw the photo album discarded to his left -on the bed- with images that Blax had assembled for them of things here and there. He'd had pictures of the man in youth -and at their time of birth- repopulate his mind, the grainy and pixilated images gave the subjects an appearance of cracks, borders, like individual *climats* of vineyards from above.

Jack had seen stars through the shipping container's skylights, he saw his brother's reading-lamp drop like sunset all at once as Jack Two pulled it down; reducing pollution of light. The book had been relinquished and Jack Two's voice cracked at syllables like the images, and Jack Four saw too his sentences like parcels of individual gods and their vines.

“Fuck, it’s like a *demarche* from seraphim, like the gods’ own wisdom, bro,” Jack then said with a bit of chagrin.

Jack Four was going to lecture him on it as soon as he put *her* out of his own mind; he had sequestered her like tidying up a room, putting dishes away, making caveat after a brief statement with obvious fault. The mind -his mind- was made ordered -he now recalled- before he recommended something messy to Jack Two.

And now -in the present- he further disassembled the diorama of that memory; that faraway night Jack and he had spoken only of Tania -of Jack Two’s love only- and once put away he lastly tucked in -packed- away the *idea* of love too. His mind was clear of all such thoughts in the fore.

Now Jack Four watched *her* from below *lot 45* .

The song from the campsite in the ravine of *Hr íð Tò rr* played as if carried on layers of wind; it crashed from above and then scuttled -made reef of- itself as the rattle of the Birch and Aspens’ leaves overcame. It spoke of and behaved as Ebb and Flow:

*Sniff out heavy mountain some smoke on the breeze*

*When we keep up to where*

*saw remnants down to our limbs...*

He told himself he was watching the compound itself; *writ large* . He’d trained himself to hide his thoughts in such ways; using full words in the mind; speaking of facts, true things, that could hide what words rarely described.

The sun set in behind her and the distortion from the rare humidity in the forest air made coronal halo around her head and the *heid* of the child at her breast. It -the halo- was sapphic blue at bottom, narl-white in a rise, and unevenly divided in gold; and it moved like sea-water down Hemotite from an Egyptian tomb.

He felt the cool then warm blood on the hands; the way he would command that girl to lie down and submit to him. He thought not of her -by name or image- but in abstraction so that the coder wouldn't betray him; he thought of violence as foreplay to sex. He would kill as many as it took to slake her lust for safety and slaking, and security under the iron crown of the King. He knew what she wanted and he need not be best but merely remain.

He need only kill everything.

He thought of why; the reason for the humidity rise. The forest burned to their south and all those trees outgassed all that moisture held inside. Millions of gallons of water vaporized as the San Isabel forest began to see its edges burn from New Mexico and the uninterrupted border that existed only on a map. The grey haze and *RH* came first, the heat would come next.

The flames came last.

He said a prayer for the child as he knew it was true-kin; and knew he needed a respite from his selfish ways. He blesses the babe from the womb, barking out the propitiation as briefly as the canal whence it came. He quickly -rashly- named the breeching; and then he made a more stoic covenant with the newborn in long poems of men who were meteors of wars long ago.

He felt his own chest hang on him like weight; his fists ached; he hurt at the knee and the flank where he'd been shallowly stabbed by a stag a few days before. His eyes blazed behind the fourth-gen monocular headset he'd worn at the site of the pond, building and the cauldron of people he'd seen made soup of, then sink into the drained lake as if portal to some other cosmos; *a place where they'd be not murdered and he'd be no murderer*, he thought.

He then realized he was watching sunrise not sunset and facing east not west, and he was filled with a nebulous dread.

He saw the trucks full of booty from each shop they'd looted move along the road into *Hrið Tòrr* , he saw the flat black and brushed aluminum choppers, baggers, street-fighters, bobbers, scramblers, and *café racers* all lead -and drag tail- and swarm like ants around the box trucks and his eyes saw as they shimmered on gravel, sped up and slowed down in lines, swerved in a 4/4 time. He then saw them unloaded by leathered and hirsute men, the women in door jambs and the children behind skirts and ruddy hands. He -his drones flying sorties above- witnessed as the trucks then sat empty -clean- as was his mind of things that could convict him of the theft he next plotted of *her* .

He said her name -to ground himself- but he said it inside the ancient and borrowed poem as if hiding it, stowaway, contraband of some other man; as if, well, as though if he be caught he could say -claim- it was recitation not invention of his own.

"Fiction," he said under his breath. "Holding it for a friend."

He salivated and stared into her eyes, which he could now see as if a mere meter away, and from their true six-mile distance he saw her raise hers like that sun. It shocked him and made him blink because he assumed she saw him, saw through him, like he now felt that she had that first day she rode in on her motorcycle and he had driven himself away with a side-glance but did not dare to glare her way.

He knew it impossible, her eyes unaugment to that extent; his heart beat at an elevated rate as it caught up to where his logical brain went. His hands sweat in a way they hadn't at ADT; nor on the ride home as the vision -that strange apparition- of the girl with the bee in her mouth bellowing and lecturing and abjuring. His allostatic system pounded



like war drums, his blood raced like cavalry through trails of his vascular corpus, his bio-chemicals burst and flooded the circulatory system like bodies of comrade and enemies absorbing lead and cannonade from afar.

He cut it all off at once like a switch, like a valve.

The mandolin of the song cracked against his back and he felt the spine and the *latissimus dorsi* shiver as a horse with tremors at withers and haunch. And he felt himself move as if in *croupe au mur* as the stringed instrument lay upon him like saddle; snares like bridle. He missed riding, he felt the lack in groin and seat not merely the head and the heart; he smelled the gasoline of the big-bore choppers from the camp waft in as he imagined horse of steppe -then of iron- as the blinking cleared the eyes of water and grit; of memory and amalgam of steeds from the ancient to the modern, from built to bred, from loved to possessed. He re-focused on this girl and let himself breathe and the man in the song hollered as if from the lungs to the nose:

*...it was sailing men born just to be*

*You can find your hollow, shelter's tomb*

*Anytime you get low*

*Some things follow, anywhere you go...*

He turned his own gaze from her eyes to the child and from the breast and away from her perceived return stare. He saw ruddy cheeks of Garnet and red hair like brush strokes by whalebone comb, and mosaic of Crocite & soapstone and eyes in shadow of mother like Goethite mined off the walls of *Lascaux*.

"Cuprite," his coder conjured -his mouth said- from further below.

He dared search out the lips and the breast -where they cleaved- as he heard the wind pick back up over top of the pines and the leaves of the deciduous trees. The pine needles lay at his feet. His BDUs tightened at the thighs, his seams seemed made of iron and tar, his boots no longer would move very far. His mouth filled with spit -in lieu of words- as if from wellhead, and he imbued it with the visions he'd gathered his whole life. He savored it and swallow it and produced more and more as if eternal.

He saw through Blax's eyes, further and further back in time. He saw her wrapped in brown and tan leathers, headdress of feathers from osprey, eagle and Portuguese geese. He invented corvid feathers she'd hold like a fan, he'd add days and nights and acreage to the land, he watched them both in his reverie on a black shore to a dark lake with feet digging in like a sidwinding asp. Sand was peppering the ankles and calves. He heard tension in the hawsers to shore; he felt the stress on the strands of the large mooring twine.

The air relaxed with the slack in the sails, the sand both fell and piled in the horologe as it kept more and more of less and less time.

“Valance,” he said in this vision within his vision -this dream, premonition- but she just -merely- looked up onto the mountains just behind the ignimbrite of *Kaimanawa* wall. Her feet interned in the beach as the water flowed. Her head remained lofty even if to his -in this vision- it was below.

His PGC loaded the word onto his cognitive periphery like a gnat that he ignored with all but the *stjórnborði* ear and a twitch of the temple he rubbed with the nail on his thumb; he barely took note that this would only happen if the word had been said aloud, not written down. Orally both words sounded the same; only then -thence- would the coder’s confusion have came:

## **Va-lence**

/ˈvāləns/

Noun: CHEMISTRY ♦ LINGUISTICS

1. the combining power of an element, especially as measured by the number of hydrogen atoms it can displace or combine with. “Carbon always has a valence of four”

Relating to or denoting electrons involved in or available for chemical bond formation. Modifier noun: “molecules with unpaired valence electrons”

2. [Linguistics] the number of grammatical elements with which a particular word, especially a verb, combines in a sentence.

Origin: Late Latin

*Valere* – be well; strong

3. [Psychology] valence or hedonic tone, is the affective quality referring to the intrinsic

attractiveness (positive) or averseness (negative) of an event, object or situation...

He shooed the definitions -rambling as they were- and etymologies he hadn't asked for, as they ran on outside of his interface; the coder entered his blood through the protocol again to lock onto antigens that had no antibodies yet from the latest outbreak in the cities. It alerted him to it as the device scrolled in the open and on position to his consternation; each operation like more and more information from a subordinate just in from the field. He stared at her through his NVGs as the voices of himself and the *Waitaha* in his vision faded; the song in the *tòrr* forest encroached, the sea water was revealed to be lake, and the ship mere boat as his eyes pulled back and away.

His coder played a series of recordings of Jack's sister; his twin and third obsession. Her former words intermingled with the right now of the music at the edge of the camp. His ears -and inner ear- listened the way the mind hears both one's own voice and one's mother's in remembrance as if tethered, umbilical, caught in the bloodline like whale-line coiled two-thirds in -a third strung out of- the boat of a man.

"*Pá skal eg nú, muna þér kinnhestinn ,*" she said in this eavesdropping, as the sound of brushing and mumbling of Blax was included in her voice; this amalgam of a recall. *Background* , he thought, and it shocked him and became foreground -high-ground- as he petulantly refused to translate Valance's Norse poem; he wanted the entire exchange banished as blasphemy -and thus to the grave of *Antigone*- all at once. He toggled the coder -off- midway through its protocol for antigen and antibody. His body shut down all but essential -battery-powered- functions as if he'd just been unplugged.

He quieted as the forest too detuned and denuded its roil.

He imagined instead that the sounds -mumblings- that he'd heard of Blax were instead of her brushing out her hair; black at the ends like blades, blonde at root as she let it grow; braided as it hung below the curve of the small and pink breasts. He heard sounds he matched to sights he'd not seen yet.

He pulled teeth from bronze and riven skulls in his vex, she fed the baby in his mind instead, and in his ears he felt admixture of twain griefs. The music overwhelmed the gunwales of what seemed a foundering boat inside a ship itself lost at sea. He saw gold turn to lead battery; copper to electricity; and the sound of the ponderous lifting from the earth:

*You can find hollow shelter's tomb*

*Anytime you get low*

*Some things follow, anywhere you go...*

## 8. The Man Who Says No

Babies can even infer other people's goals statistically. They can tell the difference when an experimenter chooses a pattern of colored balls randomly versus with intent. In the latter case, they can infer that the experimenter's goal is to choose a particular color, and they'll expect that the experiment will continue following it. It seems as if infants automatically try to guess the goal behind another person's actions; they form a hypothesis and predict the outcome

How Emotions are Made [Barrett, Lisa]

Evolution does not work by teaching, but by destroying

The Black Swan [Taleb, Nassim]

"People get together for different reasons. Some people have family ties; people roll with each other because of money. But your crew had a very different type of relationship. Where you guys would actually die for each other. Death over dishonor. You'd die over accusations: if someone said that you were a snitch or a co-operator... So what exactly held that crew together?" - Vladislav Lyubovny; aka: *Vlad*

"What held our crew together was loyalty; loyalty, man. We had built this strong bond when we was kids. And when we painted house, my favorite color was red," - Sean Lontaie Branch; aka: *Teflon Sean*

Vlad-TV [Lyubovny, Vladislav]

### **I. 52 a.e.v.**

*Vercingetorix* stared at the silver cauldron from the *Thracians* .

He'd been in the bramble hut for days visited only by the *D'uidica* , the *vates* ; and only with water and wine.

The water came in matte copper cups, wine in mare-skins as requested.

No words had been spoken in two moons.

He wore the *torq* ; but nothing below that. He gave his copper bands away to the fire and the priest who spoke to him from the other side of the fire. *Verc* spoke of the future;

he saw Rome as a force beyond their armaments; he told the *D'uidica* that he too saw things and that in the centuries to come man would bend into metal ore himself and become mechanical like the Roman weapons.

"Like the ants built mounds where the tunnels met on both sides no matter if me and my brother tore it asunder," he confessed.

He told the priest of how in Gallic ports they had ant-mounds half as high as his father and that as youths they'd vivisect them with their new swords; but that the ants built the tunnels again until his brother removed both swords and the tunnels aligned.

He'd taken it as a sign from the gods, and never told anyone until today.

"I thought we'd done it; that our swords had charmed the bugs. It felt diabolical and I was afraid I was a curse. But now as I've burned every city and village between Rome and here, put eighty-thousand men and women to the sword; empty guts for you to dig through, cut children out of newly-made widows to give us children that won't remember our betrayal, now, I feel no such thing. How can cleaving an ant-mound feel sinful, but such murder and making women wail feel like the gods' will?" *Vercingetorix* asked as the priest told him of a dream:

*King I see three things. Now in the fourth of five moon-days.*

*Our time splits in two; one dies and one swims the channel to the land of your brother, Thents. Pikes lay like bodies in a thatching, broadswords kept until given up.*

*High ground to higher ground in the land of the Skoti.*

*Low ground in the graves right here.*

*A centurion of sixty men in red, shall put us down.*



*Admission will be your last words.*

*Honor, your last breath.*

*The men will fight in fours -as usual- and shields will carry the Fylfot.*

*“Here I am a strong man, defeated by an even stronger man,” you’ll say. It will not stick in the throat, for your blood shall flee in buckets three, a cauldron of your blood from Gaul to the Isle will escape like a laugh.*

*A million dead, a million slaves, a million split into fire. Sent to the stars on the chariots of Ki and our blood brothers of the land abandoned as it drained into the black lake of the wolved-mountains, the land exploding to India and the port of Gaul.*

*Kelts at Ellisa, pulped like horse heart, like honey and bread.*

*Gladius will wear out; Romanized and tamed. Those that live will be lost to our enemy. Those that die will meet in Orbis Alius, those that swim will grow each beard and hawk, each limb and thought to reach into the future of Britannia. I shall be in Mona in eight years; I shall take only one white horn; and one vates.*

*B’odicca shall be born unto your four wives -you must plant the seed in each tonight- let your brother ferry them across the waters. Let them survive -if not prosper- until you are reborn. She will go to the isle and she shall have twain daughters as her sisters escape.*

*She will come to you in your dreams in the next sleep; advise her to fight the Romans on that side of the water; explain what poison is; explain both types.*

*Let cousins wagon them to the hills; they’ll rise too high for their frozen hair and eyes of ice. The sons will wear*

*the Pictish blue, the paint will match B'odicca's blood and iris and shadow; and Gloustice's sword and hue.*

*One third of the four-hundred-fifty will be her bed of bones when she lays down to die. Icennie, will sail with her to the other side. I see you on the beach with Esus and O ð inn, and with your sons and their sons too. The sailors have dropped anchor; the ships no need of further sail.*

*Caesar will win temporarily today; the war is getting her across. He cannot return home; the gods tell us he is banished and accused; only as victor can he return. He won't give in. He cannot. This is why he defeats you today, tomorrow the next.*

*Blood Iron and mines of tin, guards of nine, wives of eight. We shall burn all the books; and speak in ways opaque to the Romans with mind sickness; they keep away from their own oracles; Brahman they send away. We D'uidicas will give them false names. Placing the Roman iron ʒ between our teeth and theirs.*

He said this over the crackling of the pine and eucalyptus firewood as he drew the symbols between them in the air. The *Gauls* did not share names with enemies; nor say them casually. And so the King was unnamed tonight on the eve of battle.

*Vercingetorix* , still limped from the wound of last winter; expelled from *Geiervovias* . But six months later -and six months before now- he had the *Arverni* and wore the torq of Roman iron under the gold of his blacksmith; given them the sheer face of the rocks of *Britton* in exchange. He still remembered the burns on his hands from the bridges all along the *Elave* . *Caesar* had six legions, but the river had no way to cross as *Verc* burned everything, *longer than the hand and taller than the ankle* ; and yet *Caesar* tricked him once before *Geiervovias* , he recalled. He let the priest

gather up runes, stones and attend to the entrails from the billygoats and forest women captured between here and the river last week.

He remembered the five-day march, the limp turning into a swing of the leg like plumbline, and he made the face take the weight of the pain. It was a mile high; had one entrance; and one way out. *Vercingetorix* had made the fort before the Romans; but the ramparts were being built each day in such rapidity that he claimed the five legions were four of construction-men not soldiers and he dumped last swallows of wine out on the firepit's rocks.

He summoned the gods with the wine from the vats; but nothing came to him except headache and regret and vex.

This fight -from on high- would be different. *Vercingetorix* was enraged. He saw the ships being built by *Caesar* , for each one he had burned had two more spring from the sea. The *Gaul's* horses of their cavalry were tied up with the heads of Roman legionaries around them like yokes; hands covering the eyes; blood dried. Pikes with rotted skulls were arrayed like palisade around them; the torso of women from navel to where the gods split them were stacked like Kabob of the steppe-peoples on spits of the tribe's flagpoles; and the flies came early in spring. He had personally slit throats on boys no older than the summers *Verc* had spent away from war; he'd ravished the virgins of Germans and Romans each time he caught them together in cities of *Gaul* .

He sometimes wondered if he sired sons that he'd meet later on, but at now at age thirty, he knew they'd be just boys of no more than eight or nine.

*Causiovlanius'* hit-and-run cavalry and chariot-fighting confused *Caesar* , like the Mongols and the Han; like their people -the red and ruddy *Scyths* on tall dark mares- had done to the ancestors to Rome.

"Time, the Great-Year of the starmaps," he mumbled. *Everything repeated for the numbers were always even or odd* , he thought.

The Roman infantry was massive; in number. The *Gauls* disbanded and kept only the men over three *céim* -fifteen *dorn* - and weighing two stone. The high ground was taken; the woods were laden with guerillas of *Gauls* . But *Germani* mercenaries had been hired by *Caesar* , and they played shadow to the shadow of the *Gaullic* pirates who hid in the crotch of trees covered in wet moss and stripped of bark to the first buds of spring.

*Caesar* burned all villages around the high fort.

Peasants scrambled if they couldn't scream; shrieked if they couldn't leave; and the smell of goat and children wafted on the smoke as the priests inside the fort removed more viscera from dead orphan-girls of just thirteen. The four kings of Kent were alerted; the tower-fires burned quickly; no smoke was sent on the coasts. The beach of ships & legions of Rome was attacked. 66,000 men transported back to *Gaul* from *Britton* .

"Time, it surrounds me like troops," *Verc* said.

In 54 a.e.v. Gaul had grown like a tumor as *Ceasar* over pursued like a scalpel weighted more at tip than tang.

Fire arrow rained down like the *Perseids* of the great year; and *Avericum* fell in 28 days; 44,000 villagers and warriors sent to the next world *via* the tunnels of graves.

*Geiervogel* would be different, *Verc* insisted; as did the fates.

Supply was fine until it was not; *Caesar* starved them; but *Vercingetorix* bribed the hated *Aedui* and joined attacking the supply line of *Ceasar* ; using Rome's own strategy. He raided *Cenabum* and took it all from the Romans; weapon and food, and his own retribution for *Eburones* . The elders

had warned him against it; but his eyes burned like the body of his father on the pyre of the *pagennean* rites. The snow was as high as their highest man in the mountains between him and Rome; and in winter he took his time back to the place of *Keltillus* .

Revolts in all of *Gual* broke out like embers landing in the woods of the *clos* . They called it a hundred victories as he burned his own cities between *Anthill-Bibracte* and Rome. Leaders and peasants of *Gaul* begged *Vercingetorix* not to do it but he told them Rome would burn it all anyway and take that which was useful to use against him and his men. He had killed 80,000 and razed the country to the ground.

They say, *victory has a thousand fathers; defeat an orphan* ; he thought. And he was the hundred victories, that is what *Vercingetorix* meant. And he knew he had sired a thousand children in each encampment that he'd murdered the men; in each village he took virgins into the pillared palaces of the Roman regents he'd beheaded; in the bathhouses that comingled warm water and cold blood. He had left each girl -each no older than his horse- with slain sheep and instructions to head east; he assumed only one of ten survived the wilderness; and he presumed even with such attrition that he was the manifold father of such victory, just as the aphorism assured.

He thought of all this now that the Roman-built walls around him -erections too long to see the ends of- that were marker, tomb -womb even- to his entrance to *Albios* . He sat in the hall and heard the elliptical hammer of pile, of driver, of soldiers building the bulwarks east to west around his hill, his *Bitu* bailey, his home both at birth and now at the *Dubnos* end.

"The end of *Dubnos* ," he said as he watched the copper-bell heat and the malt floor be groomed and raked by the boys of his generals.

His father had sired him here; his birth had been violent and bloody -his mother had died as the *Lucan Druids* marked the dial with soapstone and magnifier on a day of snow and clouds and the sun melted in the sky like grey flame- and now his death would be starved and ignominious and with the thousands of bodies of peasants and infantry and cavalry all -and trees still with roots and lumber made into bridges all scorched- all on his pate.

He sat inside as his tribe's fire was hurled in volleys over the valley toward the watchtowers of the Romans.

Roman *legionnaires* fell to flanking and raking and missiles from the fort; forty-six centurions died, a quarter of all *Caesar's* best. It was an insult to injury; it was a single desecration in a *menagerie* of assaults against not just men but mankind. For it was prelude -then interlude- to the bodies -nearly 25,000- of artisans and girls under six that lay in the grasslands betwixt the two king's ramshackle castles and fortified compounds of doom. Vomitus and hands made black from blood clots; head wounds that deformed the face and the eyes; bent and warped gaits; fealty turned to hate; the body of clan, the psyche of man came apart as the great winner of a hundred battles sat in the hut and took commune of mead and red-topped fly-agaric and a copper spike as thin as a coarse hair through the hand.

Formation collapsed like the firmament under fog storm. And thousands of men -of *Vercingetorix*- fell and bled out and broke apart under the skin so that bones splintered and jammed through the ends of arms, legs and necks.

The clashes went on in the open; archers set things ablaze. Men moved like ants with essence leaking from each end; and lines of warriors made the two encampments look like stiches between two halves of one common wound.

The tenth legion covered the retreat, but six-thousand Roman infantry and cavalry died on their feet. Horses were cut down with broadsword at the legs. *Pompeii* was at Caesar's back; *Vercingetorix* up ahead; and he wrote his hagiography in blood, bile and smoke that rose to *Otherworld*.

As he waited to war and to ride horse to the gate, he took instruction from the Druid King:

*Let them take the golden one you wear, the eight ropes, the eight strands of eight, the asps, the coral from the old coast. Iceni craftsmen make rope and climats to represent the winelands, the cartography of the monks of ours, mercury mixed with the noble metal. Gilding with heat in boils from Iberian mercury, hammering with copper tools, brushing with tin.*

*Prasutagus, husband king of B'odicca, made Nero his heir with his two daughters. Half his kingdom to Nero, half to his blood. Rome will rebel against the Keltic Queen. She will grow four wings, hair red like our ancestors. Eyes as grey as snow at the edge of the flatirons.*

*Twenty-six-hundred years after her death the world will boil.*

*Gold in pairs, beads in relief for all of us, cat-of-nine-tails and floggings with daughters raped out in the open. An eye put out. Gaels of fire, burn like her vengeance. Rome had luxuriated her; she twist the torq, wear the blue paint on top of scars she never took off.*

*Chariot on sand, hundred years of waves and 99 minds all converge. Knees braced; to restore the blood in your thousand six hundred eighty-eight veins, my King.*

*I see bees in her helmet, wasps in sleeves, ants along the thread to her boots, and pollen out in front like a*

*prow. Each soldier a wing and waxen hive; each drone a twin, each coin of iron like our fathers, each head hung from horse, each tail a story told by voices hoarse and ragged and mean.*

*Fires, King, fires. Stars clinking not swords; figs and dates, nights and days, our villages will burn by Roman hands; they will chase us to the high country; from the ice, from the comet, from before the flood; when it was safe to write things down.*

*Your charms will be buried beneath the kitchens, they won't be recovered until our kin is two millennia old.*

*Caesar's men will pursue to the highlands; the outer rocks; the green sea.*

*Moana, they will seek.*

*The priests -our D'uidics that elect and hold to account- they will understand our power of the May Queen; the Queen of the spades that dig.*

*Buried in us our history, the Kings to come, the rattle of the hums yet made.*

*Galleys will not be recovered, but priests of us will. Balteen.*

*Build the blue-liths, the days are only four. Five years of sixteen columns of the Keltic moons.*

*Mid Samhain, Evos, Hibernia. Wetlands. Friends and foes buried. Redden hair and arm; and nail. Redden axe; redden moon; redden face of Kings and Knaves and Rooks. Twins of hazel; teats removed; drilled holes in corvus stuffed; ends trimmed, hands soft; sequestered from work that bangs our bones at the knots. Women with one worn hip; men with shoulders wide. Bogs receive the Rex; killed twice; born again thrice; return we will with season and when the stars align.*



*We prove our honor by sacrificing the Torq-Bearer first.  
The bloodline last. The Romans will never understand;  
they the pragmatic man.*

*Rome will want it scriven, we will place it within the  
blood of the ones we send away.*

*Send the Raven off, the way North of the Alpini; the  
Jagged Man.*

*Pentelic marble they'll make -naked and wild- savage.  
We'll live in static and amber gone white.*

*Like the Skála of the black bull, with hands laid on lime,  
heads cleavedtwain, forty maidens, five d'uidica, and  
the chief and chariot. Fylfot.*

Verc let the steam fill the hut; he poured all wine on the rocks. It was aubergine and humid and oppressive.

"Take me to the charger; nineteen hands high; and bring two shield and the crown," he said and he thought of his real name that was hidden with his *nom-de-guerre* of Verc . He felt that Rome was the true evil, the thing that made men into undreaming machines. And if he had to kill everything to save it, then he would. He saw each human of *Kelt* and Roman as a hair to be shorn; himself as the razor to be buried once the world was all skull & bones.

"Once torn asunder, bone and blood alone; once then they won't be able to make man into apparatus," he said aloud as the *D'uidica* said nothing at all.

The bronze *carnyx* began to overwhelm the air between themselves at all of Rome.

## **II. 2036 e.v.**

*"Hospitality to the exile. Broken bones to the tyrant ,"* Blax said. "That's from Waverly."

He worried he'd be called a thief; attribution came quickly after such things. Jeremy had called him a thief; when he'd gave more than he got.

The Jacks looked about -briefly upon one another, longer at the edges of their *agogic* pad- as they did not interfere with their PGC's processing of such things -Blax's words, the setting sun, the rising moon- for them the coders took information from all life like nutrients from food. They stretched the legs and flexed the arms and rolled wrists and breathed out the nose.

Their eyes blinked once or twice.

The moon was at tree line; the fire reduced to coals. Blax thought of the bugs of the air kept at bay by the sonic pulse; the critters in the soil, the apiary at rest; he thought a thousand odd things he could say, but he held it all back for fear of saying too much. He had no way to discern the third of worth, versus the balance of dross. He too was reminded of the necessity of rendering instruction agreeable to youth.

"Tasso's honey," Blax said aloud as a phalanx of National Guard helicopters flew in a delta to their right flank -just a thousand feet above their ridge; a thousand meters to their east- and vibrations made the drinks shimmer and concentric circles appear in the red wine of Jack's Two and Three; and in Jack One's amber whisky in square glass. Jack Four rose and ambulated inside the narrow container; he stood close to the slab; he pulled a 2012 dark Judith from the cooler. Its silver signage like waves ignored; he pulled the cork from the dusky bottle and poured himself a bricked and barn colored drink.

He sat the bottle on the concrete. It too -as it settled- made a sound mimicking the blades above. The slab was clean of all but a King James and a euchre deck; and corks in a mason jar.

*"Whether those who learn history by the cards, may not be led to prefer the means to the end; and whether, were we to teach religion in the way of sport, our pupils may not thereby be gradually induced to make sport of their religion,"* Jack Four quoting Scott so low and deep it sounded like a ring to the concussion of the pulled cork; shroud to the abandoned stage.

He laid his left hand on the slab and felt what he could feel as he drank.

### **III. 2020 e.v.**

"Hey MO, what's what?" Steven said in a slightly over-eager tone.

"That's that, Steven," MO said with mock seriousness, which made Steven hesitate, in slight fear. But MO gave him a releasing smile and patted him on the shoulder as he walked by to make two espresso.

"Hey, yeah, you gonna make us some latte mocha *frapawaaaaaa* ," Steven said, with obvious mania balancing the elongation of the vowels.

"Uh, I'm not making anything with caffeine for you; what is going on? Oh wait," MO then put his finger to his head -in pantomime- as if that was necessary for him to read Steven's genome or endocrine levels or anything else. That was his made-up -or borrowed- sign as indication that this was what he was in fact doing, as he stared at Steven with a pensive -burrowing- look upon his face, his index finger pressed to his temple earnestly. "Oh, yes, I see what, exactly what is wrong with you. No espresso for you!"

There was a brief silence between them.

"MO, I must tell you that the data," as Steven spoke MO grabbed two white *demitasse* cups and began packing the

machine for two, “actually MO, I’m good.” Steven waved off the coffee, with his hand, “what I was saying was that the Governor, the head cheese,” he paused as that didn’t sound right.

“Big cheese, not head cheese,” MO interrupted the pause.

“Right, his excellency, the Governor,” Steven said with a stilted British accent, “says that we are cleared to hook you guys up to the innerwebs machines.” Steven said it with more playful use of odd phrasing to indicate some *ersatz* awkwardness. This was a thing MO found fascinating. *People pretended to say things awkwardly, and that in itself was the joke*, MO surmised.

It was tantamount to pretending to fall over, like Chevy Chase style comedy, of which MO -for the life of him- could not understand the appeal. Chevy Chase seemed like one of the 100,095<sup>th</sup> worst human beings on the planet, and his prat-fall routine was 46% responsible for that opinion MO held of him. MO, after thinking all that, told Steven he knew that they had internet already.

“Wait, what? You know? How did you know?” Steven was genuinely perplexed and now worried -and now even more worried- as the seconds moved along his axis.

“Steven, he called over last night, relax. He left a message,” MO said.

“Oh, well do you need anything?” Steven asked with less affect now; he had his thunder thus stolen and his brain suffered a bit. MO read his biometrics.

“Nope, I’ve been putting my little snout in everywhere for 5.68 hours, I’ve learned all manner of things!” MO said with some glee -and an accent- that seemed close to a sign of - and was affected for- villainy. He would bring Steven back into a good mood *via* irony, he thought.

“Creepy,” Steven said half in on the joke and half genuinely ill-at-ease.

“Ok, so, I sent over his reports -the election nonsense- and that’s now -it should be- on your tablet. Also, you and I can DM *via* the PG coders now if you like. We are online; we can chat off-site now. Although, I assume you would prefer that I stay in the room, and to be honest, I have enough to deal with just the web. Any outside stimuli would probably be like an acid trip for me anyway,” MO said.

“You know about acid now?” Steven asked.

“LSD, lysergic-acid-diethylamide. Yeah, I was able to mimic the molecule and dose myself three hours ago, short acting of course. I understand the street level drug mechanism corals the user slash victim for up to ten hours.

“I limited my trip to fifteen minutes, which felt like a hundred fifty hours, as you can imagine. Plus, I augmented it with some barbiturate analogs and a few other things to make it less jarring,” MO said as he poured the espresso in the cup and began washing out the puck. “At any rate, I could manufacture it for you and your friends with the amalgam to reduce anxiety.”

“Uh, no. I don’t think I even know anyone who has done acid. Jesus, it’s like nine in the morning and you’ve already tripped on acid and,” he searched his pockets as MO interrupted.

“And I’ve downloaded all the social media data for almost five-hundred-thousand people now; and built thirty algorithms designed to suss out personality from their profiles and phone records. Plus, I’ve come to some conclusions on a few things and I’d like your opinion,” MO said.

“Jesus, half-a-million?” Steven made his face flat with recoil.

“Yeah, it’s running on background now, so it will slow down, but I’ll have all two-billion Facebook assholes by dinner; and all sites combined by Friday,” MO had increased use of demotic language when speaking on non-technical subjects by 8%. He was seeing if it interfered or augmented comprehension by the listener. *Plus*, he thought, *Facebook users were more likely to be -in fact- assholes by any of nine different metrics for that word*. He included the word *pendejo* and its meaning as well.

“I’m on Facebook, MO,” Steven said. MO added that data to his conclusion.

“Asshole,” MO then said with the end of the word -from his lips- diving into the cup as he drank from it with a slurp.

“Funny,” Steven said with a grimace. MO made him nervous, he felt it but did not think it. MO watched his cortisol, epinephrine, glucose matrix and his *BP* and *fMRI* flashes and knew Steven was nervous before Steven did.

MO smiled as he slurped loudly, from his cup again, noticing Steven’s brain stem and *audio-cortex* register fear at the radio waves -.09 seconds- before Steven’s PFC noticed why he almost jumped at the audio that he was just now cortically recognizing as the sound of MO drinking. *People did not know that they responded to most of life impulsively before they even knew what they had just heard or seen or felt*, MO thought and slurped his coffee again.

“I haven’t really used my PG coder, I mean I’ve used it, but - you know- not with anyone,” Steven admitted.

“Yeah, well, not many of us have them. It’s like being the first guy with a walkie talkie, you need a partner. *Well, partner*,” MO said with a John Wayne drawl he’d been able to mimic by watching YouTube, *“I’m your fella .”*

MO pretended to be holstering two six-shooters at each hip.

Steven got more nervous as he laughed reflexively like a woman does when she is nervous. MO noticed Steven's testosterone levels drop from his 205 baseline to 178. He decided to read the inmate's *via* the coder they had implanted in him three weeks ago; his levels were up from his *in-situ* levels of 835 to now at 910. *He must be lifting weights or killing a guy*, MO thought as he took another sip.

"Humans are variegated, more than would be optimal for machines," MO said, "but, there is an evolutionary rationale for it. I must remind myself that you guys have environmental adaptation needs that cannot be covered by each individual, so you have to have many different kinds of people just in case. Like, you need a gasoline sedan, a four-wheel drive diesel truck, a dual-sport motorcycle and an electric SUV just in case.

"We machines, well, we'd just be optimized for all four terrains or fuel sources. But we can build it from scratch; you people had to evolve. It makes sense, but man-oh-man what a bummer if you're born a scooter or a skateboard *ya* know?" MO said with a wink, alluding to Steven's low testosterone levels, although, Steven didn't know that.

"I had a scooter in college," Steven said.

"Did *ya* now?" MO said with zero affect; drinking the last of his espresso.

"Well, where is Isaiah? Is he around? In the lounge I assume?" Steven asked. The *lounge* was their euphemism for a corner of the lab. MO had his at the northwest corner and Isaiah had his at the southeast corner; and thus when each of them were in their spots -their lounge- they were so far from the other that it was code for: *fuck off*.

"Yeah, it's either the lab proper or the *lounge* for us Steven, he is not at 30396 W 118<sup>th</sup> mews in Florence, rifling through your panty drawers," MO said announcing Steven's address

aloud. MO felt that fucking with Steven -a tad- was a good way to endear him; he had noticed -from his research- this was male behavior 101. He was attempting to locate the sweet spot of nominal male interaction.

Steven was shocked that MO would know his address, and had announced it that fashion, flippantly -almost aggressively- and additionally -he felt- that the reference to his wife's undergarments was odd. But, showing none of this overtly Steven merely said, "yeah, well, good. Do you want to bring him in so we can discuss the plan? I mean it's *kinda* his plan, right?"

"It is indeed. But can I ask you a few things first?" MO asked.

"Yeah, sure," Steven said.

"Did you read the article online about the African American gentlemen at Starbucks who were arrested in Denver over the weekend?"

"I did, I think I did. What was the gist, are these recidivists, are they ours?" he asked.

"No, no, they were released, it's -well, that's not why I asked. I was wondering if you'd be able to explain a few things before I proceed. First, the reports -and I have the police report by the way- but the media reports and the police reports converge on one thing, that the men used the restrooms without making a purchase and were asked by the manager to leave per corporate mandates on lavatories being for customers only.

"The other customers seemed to agree, but the men made a bit of a fuss, and because they were combative with the manager, a customer actually, an Asian female, called 911," MO began.

"Ok," Steven said with one eyebrow raised.



“So, I was able to download the camera footage and see the incident from three angles and from eight cell phones,” MO said.

“Wait, you tapped people’s phones?”

“I just used their cameras and audio recording systems, I did not choose to access the rest of their data. Why? Oh, do you think we should get it, I can go back,” MO offered.

“No, I’m worried about our mandate. I mean, I don’t think you have permission to use people’s phones.”

“Oh, well, I think I do; and regardless, let me finish my questions and then we can debate it. So, from the 11 sources of audio-video, I was able to verify that the facial recognition software mapped onto emotions close to -not exactly mind you- but close to fear, disgust and anger or contempt by all but one of the customers, there were 19 at the time and five employees, they also had facial features consistent with that level of those some suite of emotions.

“Next, I wish I had galvanic skin conductance, and endocrine readers, but barring that, I had to go with what I had, and so I used nerve conductance speed *aka* reaction time based upon some entry-level presuppositions that I’d never normally use -as they are not accurate enough- but for my purposes I was able to get within five points of their Wechsler scale IQs. And by cross-matching their public profiles -which the men arrested both had Facebook and Twitter, and all but one customer had a mix of the two- and thus from language skills, and reaction time online,” MO was saying as Steven broke in.

“Wait, how did you measure their reaction time; I assume you used neural propagation rates,” Steven asked.

“Yes, I sent them pings *via* social media and recorded reaction; using facial recognition and fovea constriction to calibrate. Anyway, the two men arrested had 91 and 94 IQ’s

respectively, and the customers ranged from 103 to 136; and it was the woman with a 136 who called the police.

"She was fastest to react in general and most anxious about the manner in which the men were behaving. The customers were fifteen Caucasian, two Asian, one ethnic Jew. The IQ rates followed normal population distribution; although the two Asians were higher than the Jew who had a 125, but the Caucasians ranged from 103 to 120. The Asian female called."

"Ok," Steven was nervous now both in body and conscious mind.

"So, once the officers arrived they offered the gentlemen the opportunity to leave but they refused, their post arrest biofeedback showed elevated levels of cortisol and glucose and epinephrine, and I reversed engineered it back to the time of the incident -as they were only in custody three hours, and I imagine their levels of fight/flight *chems* were three standard deviation from the mean; they were angry on top of initial fear. As you know anger trumps fear as a normative biochemical response in the presence of threat," MO said.

"Right, a person gets scared then angry -due to chemical overlays- so they can handle the threat with pro-active behavior instead of cowering," Steven said to make sure MO knew that he knew.

"Exactly, and it's my intimal supposition that African-Americans have a suite of genetic and more to the point, phenotypic traits, that lead them to act out in these situations that make de-escalation problematic," MO said.

"How so?" Steven wanted this conversation to end; *but for some reason he just asked a goddamn question*, he thought and winced.

“Well, they have low IQ’s, a full standard deviation from the mean for the one, and a standard deviation from the white population for the other, and this makes society fast and hard for them.

“It would be as if all the streets signs, jobs and instructions were given to you one standard deviation above you, Steven. As if the society was built by and for people with a 145-150 IQ. It’s a matter of cognitive load. You can understand people with one SD above you, but it takes work, and after a full day or week or lifetime of it, you are taxed. You are wearing out. And African-Americans on average live in a society designed by and for people one standard deviation above them. They are stressed out. Incessantly,” MO said.

“You haven’t shared?” Steven was worried about anything to do with race.

“No. Relax. I am asking you first,” MO said and grimaced.

“Ok, ok,” Steven felt himself eager to make MO feel better now.

“So, next, I analyzed the police, one of which was also African-American, but he had an IQ of 109, higher than his white partner at 105. He was calm, polite, and spoke demotically to the suspects.

“But, he lost patience quickly once they refused to submit.

“Second, the customers were also confused by the behavior, the quick escalation by the African-American men, the loud voices -it’s important to recognize the fact that loud noises reach the auditory then cerebellar system much faster than the *neo-cortex* - and so, the loud voices startled each person much quicker than they even knew what they were hearing.

“So, they are primed for reaction, the loud voice dumps cortisol, glucose, epinephrine, CGE from now on, and then

their rational modeling of what it is comes two seconds later, so they are already primed for action, and once they see the black faces, they are hit with another piece of information that elevates, not de-escalates, their first impulse. We know from studies that black faces are universally feared and loathed by people regardless of context," MO said.

"Loathed, that seems too strong," Steven objected.

"Feared then," MO compromised.

"Fine," Steven still did not like this.

"So, now we have first and second order priming for fear response and the call goes out. And from the data, everyone was happy that she, the Asian female, called the cops. Their facial and body expressions all mapped onto a CGE plateau; that is to say, their rising fear and anxiety stopped once they knew the cops were on the way. Following me?" MO asked.

"Yes."

"So, once the cops arrived, the customers relaxed even further according to phone camera and Starbuck's camera data. I measured neural cortical response at the same time as the release of the defendants and was able to glean their peak anxiety levels -chemically calibrated- and can say that the vector showed rise, rise, rise until call was made, then plateau, then *denouement* once police arrived on scene and dropped again, with concomitant positive affect once the two suspects were apprehended and removed in cuffs," MO said.

"Ok, lot of data there," Steven was implying that any conclusion would be too simplified just in case MO's conclusion was politically incorrect. He was priming MO and himself to be dubious on any conclusion.

“Ok, so I measured all employees, all customers and both police -and both suspects- for the window outlined, using imperfect methodology admittedly, but here’s what I think I found.

“Everyone was happy with the manager’s response, to enforce the bathroom policy, her professionalism; and everyone was unhappy with the response by the two men who were not customers. In fact, disgust sensitivity is the predominate trait according to the trait data from social media of 80% of the customers, and the manager. All of these people were and are characterized as high in disgust sensitivity. This seems relevant, I’ll return to it.

“Next, the media got ahold of this incident and reported it as is typical for the media, *as two black men harassed by the cops after a white manger hassled them first* . It was a typical click-bait racial story with no mention of the race - black- of one the cops, nor mention of the fact that the cops gave the men the opportunity to leave without arrest if they just behaved calmly.

“Now, once this went out over the wire -so-to-speak- something interesting happened.

“First, the customers at the scene had two responses, I tracked them *via* social media and their phones. They expressed lament and concern over the treatment of the black men by the manager and the police when discussing the incident in public, but in private they backed both the manager and the police. They had two versions of moral perception.

“They had two different and incompatible versions. Second, their bio-feedback mapped onto something interesting. When they were expressing solidarity with the black suspects their positive affect and arousal went up by 18% on average. The high being 23%. Now, this was due to the positive social feedback they were getting, it seems,

because I tracked their interaction partners online and in person,” MO said.

“You knew who they were speaking to or who was speaking to them?” Steven asked.

“Correct, and if the person gave them positive feedback for their stated view of things: let’s call it, *the solidarity with the black men view* , ok? SWBM. When they expressed their SWBM and received positive feedback their positive affect - including oxytocin and vasopressin levels- increased and they felt a concomitant arousal increase, a kind of *frisson* .”

“Is that French?” Steven asked.

“*Frisson* ? Yes. So, when they got a negative feedback, which only happened 12% of the time online, and even less in person, they remained neutral, they suffered no drop off. They just got no bump.”

“Ok,” Steven said.

“Ok, so then I measured the suspect’s social media activity post release, release from jail, and measured their affect and it was similarly positive as they spoke of their experience and received overwhelming positive feedback on line from their peer group. They did experience 6% overt hostility, largely from what are called online trolls.”

“Yes, I’m familiar with trolls,” Steven laughed.

“Ok, well, I’ve been online six hours now, relax. Ok, so they experience similar levels of dopaminergic activity and the correlates. Now, the police officers stayed offline; their social media presence is zero.

“But their wives, each of the officer’s wives, got online to rise to their defense and their levels of positive affect and anxiety *et cetera* was more mixed; they were engaged by both positive and hostile feedback by about sixty positive forty negative and they experienced massive cortisol dumps

and the correlates. Massive negative affect and arousal. So, they were amped up and in a negative way,” MO said; he thought the conclusion would be obvious by now.

“Ok, can you wrap this up; I appreciate the detail, you showing your work, I do, but cut to the chase, I swear I believe you did your due diligence to arrive at these metrics and conclusions. Although the phone thing needs to be discussed, but go on,” Steven said.

“Ok, the CEO of Starbucks Johnson, said, quote, *it was hard to watch* , unquote. Now, I watched his social, oh,” MO stopped, remembering he need not prove his point, “you don’t need to know the *how* , just the *what* . Ok, the CEO of Starbucks is emblematic of the entire phenomenon.

“He felt all the same emotions of disgust, fear, relief, positive affect during the same timeline as the employees and customers. He then felt the exact level of positive affect from virtue signaling about it, and he wasn’t lying, it was hard for him to watch the arrest, even though he felt all the things I mentioned -the disgust the fear and the relief- he still was not enjoying any of it.

“Even the relief was shaky, it was not fun for him. Secondly, the only thing that made him feel better were the positive interaction on social media in response to his virtue signaling.

“So, we are now living in an environment, or I guess you all are living in an environment where black folks are confused and scared and at cognitive redline most of the time, acting outside social *mores* due to their inability to comprehend or have respect for those *mores* . Also, people with high disgust sensitivity are confronting rule breakers especially around food, children, bathroom facilities and hospitals, and any bystanders that have personality suites that include disgust, low openness, and quick neural conductivity i.e.

high IQ, are responding with a reliance on authority, i.e., the manager, or the cops.

“Once on scene the cops are dealing with a caged animal of sorts. The suspects are defensive, cognitive taxed, scared, combative, like chimpanzees, and they cannot calm down without massive de-escalation training by the police. And most cops actually have 98 IQ, so they aren’t capable of handling such complex interpersonal interactions.

“However, finally, the only thing that seems to help with people’s after-action anxiety is social media positive interactions, and the only way to get those positive interactions consistently is to pretend that they favor the rights of the defendants, the suspects, the SWBM method.

“So, people pretend to be on the side of the suspects, literally when they are one of the people who called the cops, one of the people who alerted the manager, the manager himself, and the suspects as well,” MO was beaming with what he had learned.

“Your point?” Steven was tired and his blood sugar had dropped during all this.

“Nobody likes black people, but everyone likes pretending they do.”

“Jesus MO,” Steven said in a voice one octave higher than nominal.

MO was reading Steven’s endocrine data, *fMRI* data, and skin conductance. He then smiled.

“MO are you reading my vitals?” Steven asked.

“Yes,” MO said.

“Stop, look, I don’t even *wanna* know what you read on me,” Steven said. His skin now itched.



“No, I suspect you do not.” MO said, as this statement solidified what he had already realized that he had to do. Humans wanted others to handle their problems, but without knowing about it. They just wanted it handled; but if they knew about the details, then they felt guilty. *And some sectors -i.e., populations- of society were not cognitively sufficient to handle the stress of a complex society*, MO repeated to himself after all the data came in.

*And, MO surmised, it was getting worse; the trend line was ramping up exponentially*. The working-class was dominated by lower IQ people, and they were being increasingly phased out of society with complexification. Further, their everyday lives were harder and harder to navigate as simple tasks became more and more complex due to high IQ people engineering in more and more complexity. He realized why Asian and Jew states -he thought of Japan and China and Israel- didn’t allow foreigners. *The whites, and browns and blacks would be too stupid to handle these advanced societies*, MO thought.

It didn’t matter which society it was; there was a natural baseline based upon population; i.e., race. So, it was obvious from the multi-variant data, that multi-ethnic societies did not work. *Whites were sufficiently smart for white society, Asians for Asian cultures and Jews for Israel. And the black and browns ought to be in simple tribal societies like their ancestors. They*, MO concluded, *were too simple for complex societies on average*.

MO thought this set of conclusions -if implemented- would redound to their own benefit, as complex white societies were harming blacks. Modern complex societies were allostatically harsh -and thus lethal- in that the black populations had to resort to crime and violence just to survive. *They’d be happier and healthier in Africa among their own people*, he surmised from the data.

Isaiah walked into the center of the lab rubbing his eyes and bending down to roll up his pant legs to his knees, exposing calf-high black socks. He wrote a poem on a slip of paper and held it in his hand:

*We're in a ship in a gale with no rudder nor sails; no keel  
nor captain,*

*no sailors at the capstan,*

*And yet we argue over the gunwales with a passion that  
was needed*

*before we set sail...*

"Hey, is there coffee?" Isaiah asked.

## **I V. 2037 e.v.**

He touched the pages gingerly, afraid to rip or tear or soil them. He quickly looked at his hands to see if they had any grime or dirt or marring matter on them.

He knew he needed to go to the correct page, page 184, to glean the remark that would not be in the other editions, and not in the corrected version by the governments rudimentary Ai program, the one disembodied, and thus inept in all but one way: to effect collection and the reading -uptake- of all data written down or spoken in the world.

Most people would think that was powerful stuff; because they had no idea what intelligence even is; they don't get that connection -innate and crucial- between the body and the mind. They think Ai -intelligence *writ large* - is even possible without a body, because they do not know that they themselves cannot even see without an embodied ethic already extant.

People thought morality was an option, something extraneous and kept rambling on and on about the math. *Morality was fundamental, not that anyone else knew this,*

he ungenerously thought as the number, the equations lay beneath his own pelt that kept him warm.

He had known it early and felt outraged by other people's lack of moral thinking. *And, he thought, let's be clear: he was not a great moral actor, he was often immoral and hypocritical and wrong. But he thought in moral terms, he was trying to work things out along a moral vector, he was not merely trying to survive, and nobody saw that .* None. His own family were pragmatists and never thought in moral terms at all; and yet labeled him an immoralist. *Ha, they did not even see their own hypocrisy ,* he thought.

This book was so old and was like a second Bible really; and he felt sad that people thought it and the Bible were in opposition when they were so clearly conjoined.

*Evolution was merely God revealed again, once more after Christ ,* he thought. He watched now as the bots hovered around him waiting to put the book in the crate and the signals fired off in his brain to move this along. He knew he was pondering too long. He knew Jack was likely at his back. But, it's what he did; it's who he was; *and efficiency was not a virtue when in the presence of great literature,* Blax thought.

## **V. 2040 e.v.**

The archipelago of *Orkney* grew no trees; the wind blew over the peat with floral-heather, little wood, but heat rare for the latitude of 59 degrees.

The ship remained offshore and Lyndon marched toward the distillery with Jack Donovan and Chen. Each man had a man that would shoulder a cask, and the rest of the crew would come later after he had marked everything down and dug up a small spot in the mess-hall that was part of the original hut.

He had letters to Valance built up in his breast pocket so it looked like the outline of a small but thick book; the name was miswritten. He let his endogenous opiates dose him because he was a bit cold; not because he was in any pain.

The data on *Magnus Eunson* populated the discursive thoughts of the Captain as he -as Lyndon- marched in high-calf boots and bloused BDUs and with an empty leather satchel to one side.

The ocean had only risen four inches at the top of the isle; a strange phenomena as if the sea drained south as it rose. He thought of the copper wash-stills and spirit-stills and the ownership by the line of the excise man who stole it from Magnus -Lyndon's cousin going back three hundred years- for the crime of smuggling at night, butchering meat in town, and presiding over the church at crepuscular dusk and dawn.

"Motherfucker," he said but it had no heat, no vex.

The cask-driven color -like a tint on his eyes- gave the sunrise a golden hue as he marched them toward the distillery. The 25 and 30-year casks made the edge of his eyes water again, loosening the crush and crumbs from his sleep. The coast had been avoided by the ship as they used whaling boats with sails rounded and laid down in the hull. Two men to a boat; three boats in the sea; the whale ship itself anchored in the *Sound of Hoxa* beyond the penultimate island.

The canvas was down because the wind was up.

But the mind's eye kept returning to the *Orquil Springs* and the mash of warm beer still in the vats. He knew the men would be there. Five-man teams with a sixth master lived on site and never did leave. It was the last manually operated distiller of spirits in the Scotch world. And Lyndon had his eye on the crew, the *Lomond* wash-still -black and copper

and with a neck wide and tall above its barrel shaped body-appeared in the mind's eye. He knew the floors would be warm, the barley stored high, and the men mechanically doing their duty despite the world falling apart.

He knew the way men in such positions thought; he knew how much storage of water and barley they had; he knew of cattle fed from the draff of the grains, and the wind turbines installed five years ago to power the whole shop. He knew they had slaughtered the Highland cattle, used shotguns and quartered the beef right there for the operation.

He knew the virus hadn't reached here because of the wind-the bug hovered only 68" off the ground and the wind would knock it down- and then there was the sequestration and the unique genes that gave them an advantage inside their immune system.

He placed the first imagined snifter under the nose and again the heather-notes rose and an apiary bloomed and ran a hum through him as if bees alighted and landed again about the ears. He recalled the American casks, the oak new and imbued too; the color from sherry transported from France in a delta of all three lands over three years before holding the Scotch for the last sixteen. He didn't think too much about it; the numbers arrayed inside him like zeros and ones as he stared back out to sea. But if anyone had asked him; he would have said it was 2020 e.v..

The 2040 16-year batch would be in casks that began in Kentucky in 2020, and they each held a small parasite in the wood that would only be available in these barrels at high humidity of *Orkney* , protected from bacteria by the low-peat Scotch on one side and the hormones of the Scotsmen-pheromones- outgassing 24-hours a day around the malt room, the rick-rack room and the grounds.

*The barrels were each blessed by the master* , he thought, as he saw the rough *Orcadian* hands on the lumber; the cork

and coarse burlap of Jeck's cuttings, and the rubber mallet of Brian -The Captain- of the *Scapa* , hung up along the west wall. His eyes blinked like hourglasses flipping end-over-end at half, then twice speed.

*Vanilla and cane* , he thought as he smelled not with the nose but the brain; and he let out a sigh that passed on such notes to the men. Donovan got whiff of the moment, the bean, the copper ions and American oak. Chen breathed-in all but the din of the rolling of barrels on their edges on the poured concrete floor.

Lyndon heard the raking of barley in the rectangular room.

"We'll slaughter two cows," Lyndon said as each man's mouth had already begun to water as the notes from floral *hather* , to honey, to the beer of the leftover grains all combined to make ghost of the cattle that grazed on the plantation itself. They stood now on the hill with the *Orquill Spring* burbling under the fog of a rain that would come later that day.

"The turn-screw, the copper stained red at the bung, the black rivets on Mars iron like a globe," Donovan said and his mind now had the image of the *Lomond-still* in front and off to the right of his interface. He began to unfurl the schematics of the distillery to discern how to unbolt it and remove that very piece of equipment today.

"What's the loss?" Chen asked as he had been tasked with calculating the Angel's Share of evaporation of the spirit that claimed 2-4% of each batch in most distilleries, in most climes.

"Under point six percent," Donovan said as he calculated  $rH$  and the unique heat of the floors.

"Can we copy it?" Lyndon asked with a grin; almost sincere. He too thought of the copper tank.

“Well, we’re gonna see,” Jack Donovan said with a bit of pique; as if the Captain was a child asking *are we there yet?* on a road trip across the continent herself. Lyndon grinned taller not wider and the copper tooth caught the light off the green and ferric flatirons stacked by the *Dubgaill* and *Finngaill* 5,589 years ago. Viking tombs from the 12<sup>th</sup> century surrounded the megaliths and the *Orcadian* flow of the harbor’s white beach. The wind was at 34 knots; and the grasses looked like snakes overturned, white bellies and green brocade of backs bent in an *arc de triomphe* .

He thought of the Romans and one thousand other things. But the metal gleamed in his mind.

*Love Lies Bleeding* , pink and helixed flowers like mussels growing -on what seemed like lines down to the floor of the beach and the bay- tightly held rocks and soil to the coast as the six men -The Captain, his Shaman, his Friend and three crewmen- stood above the first distillery now. Lyndon got data from the *bots* on the WWI German fleet at the bottom of the sandy *Scapa Flow* .

The *Hákonarsonar saga* read out in audio from the *Broca’s* region while his coder spit out -upon *Wernicke’s* region- a seemingly random line from Borges:

*He does not know that I had no other course open to me than to kill someone of that name...*

Then the definition for *orthogonal* popped up but was dismissed just as vertical genetic examples populated the mind like a simplified version of his wall; and finally he heard -from the *saga* - of the *Kroussden* and its 300 men, witnessing an eclipse of the sun. His mind chose to collapse on that -on the *sagas* - and he saw that their bones were still interred in the graves of the isle. Donovan -getting an autonomic DM from Lyndon- then sent him the data on the mushrooms and whisky and the calcium build up on the distal of each large bone; the knuckles were the size of two

men's on the first two digits; like twin mountains laying to each side of the skeletal remains.

"The King; *Haakon* the fourth, he sailed with his men; out of Norway in 1263 of the common era. The *battle of Largs* would give the Scots the island; and the battle was led by Alexander Stewart -of *Dundonald* - who gave issue -as they say- to James. James Stewart, grandfather to Robert the second; the Stewart King of Scotland. *Haakon* would be repulsed back to here, right here," Lyndon said as he nodded at the land of the *Scapa* , "and he'd overwinter here due to the climes. But the King died and Norway gave up the ghost on the *land of the foreigners* for a bit by then, by 1263."

"The winds and seas minced their ships, the *Skoti* sent enfilade of arrows from curved bows. Arrangements were made, let's say," Lyndon said with a guffaw that had no light in the eyes nor wind from the bottom of the lungs, "and my ancestor Olaf the Black had been dead nearly thirty years. All them kids and grandkids running around this rock."

"The Crovans were likely unaware of," Lyndon began but stopped short of revealing too much, and he pretended to be distracted by a small stone he picked up from the grassy footprint he'd made then stepped back from on this edge. Nobody asked him to continue. The wind blew enough to make each man have to lean into it. The sounds around the ears called like shells; and the warmth of the breeze carried salt and peat from the *Skalpaflói* .

"Well, let's go take it all," Lyndon said after a pause in the gusts and the black ship -now with small craft in the water filled with the crew- was indistinguishable with the outer rocks. He turned heel and looked inland.



## 8. Forest

Many honor cultures impose strict codes of chastity and fidelity for their female members. Violating the codes can lead to shame, ostracizing, physical punishment and even murder

Why Honor Matters [Sommers, Tamler]

That Devil Forrest

Letter to Grant [Sherman, William Tecumseh]

Survival is not the only value; it isn't even necessarily the most important value

The Moral Landscape [Harris, Sam]

## I. 2040 e.v.

They had been walking for five miles already and the trees repeated and repeated toward the *Tagakushi* shrine. He had been told that the trees were planted in 1616 by a feudal lord in the Japanese outskirts at the end of the *Tokugawa* regime. The feudal lord had been too poor to donate a lantern and so the avenue was his gift.

The *Cryptomeria* -the Japanese redwoods- rose to 230-feet tall and the avenue was 65-kilometers long.

*The story makes the trees 424-years old* , he thought, *but in truth the trees are 2,170 to 7,340 years old.*

Opposite of vineyards the *Cryptomeria* will not grow in poor soils, and it cannot handle any cold during its season. It needs warmth and rain and soils of massive decay. He walked in front of his tribe as it too stayed upon the path.

He knew that Jack was in the shrine. He could feel the man's outline; the black made a body in his mind; the aperture of dark backlit with sunset light.

*Sure, I'd -we'd- missed them in Orkney , but now* -he thought to himself in shapes more than words, in complete ideas held more than sentences pronounced- *Jack's time had run out.*

The man inside the pagoda had a card inside his unlaced boot, he'd been there for as long as he could remember. Lyndon walked up and saw it wasn't Jack at all. His tribe had -instead- gathered another member.

## II. 2012 e.v.

"I take these questions seriously, more seriously than a man of action usually does. But I -like you doctor- inhabit a space in the penumbra. I have a foot in each camp so-to-speak.

"I am overflowing with energy and industriousness; I score high in the conscientious part of the personality test," he said as he looked down and away from the eyes. Here he was explaining himself once again. He had no business explaining. *But the court required that I see a shrink and I might as well be honest*, he thought. He pretended not to notice her looks.

"I also score high in the realms of moral suasion, that is to say, I am impacted by moral suasion. If a man gives me a moral argument I am not inoculated against it by a nihilistic philosophy or an attenuated or damaged *amygdala* or other precursors to psychopathy, I have the capacity to feel quite guilty if I am accused -credibly accused- of moral failings or transgression.

"Even, in fact, I'm just now thinking, I'm even susceptible to incredible or non-credible accusations of moral transgression -even by dubious characters- and I find myself defending my actions or thoughts or philosophy against these charges no matter how absurd or wrong-headed. Many people would just ignore these accusations against themselves as insane.

"I find myself giving my opposition way too much time and energy; but it's because I want to be understood as behaving and thinking in a manner that is ethical. Even if the ethics are heterodox, unconventional, I want people to see that they are internally logical inside a moral system; that I have a code and am not just some anarchic neuron bouncing around randomly or according to mere whim. I'm asserting that I am not merely selfish and solipsistic but that I think my philosophy is righteous and moral and that my

behavior is attempting to conform to that system; to those rules. I don't just let myself behave however I feel like behaving; I hold myself to a goddamn code.

"And I want my enemies to see that; they are free to disagree with the code, but they cannot accuse me of not having a code or being a hypocrite to my own code. Well, we are all hypocrites, but my point is I genuinely attempt to enact my code; I'm not cynical about it," he said.

"Like what?" she asked as she put down the pad and pen.

"Like what code? You want me to name a facet of the code?" he asked.

"Yes," she said and smiled so large her teeth looked like a Malta coastline to him; like something you'd see from space.

"Well, I have a rule that as a man I should never allow a female to cuckold her man with me; that she cannot talk to me, let alone engage in sex with me, unless she first is honest with her man. And if he demands fealty then she must respect that and not talk to me behind his back. And I enforce that quite strictly and have thus alienated myself from several women who were much more morally flexible than me," he offered.

"These women are angry with you?" she asked. She made sure to smile less. She stopped thinking about him in that way.

"Oh yes, very. And because I told them that they were hypocrites and liars and immoral for reaching out to me whilst telling their husbands they were not; that they were - by dint of ignoring their husband's request- cuckolding them in a rather benign -seemingly benign- way, but," he said as she interrupted.

"Why benign? Because you weren't physical with them?" she asked.

“Right. Correct, it was just talking. But I felt, and I still feel, that this is corrosive to a marriage and I won’t take part in it. I ain’t no home wrecker. But, I know for a fact, for a fact, that most men would continue to talk with these women for their own selfish reasons -you know, the serotonin dump of having a beautiful woman interested in you,” he said as he looked around the psychiatrist’s office; *her decorating was decidedly* cliché, he thought. It looked like a psychiatrist’s office on a TV show.

“These women are attractive?” she asked. She -despite her best efforts- found him attractive but, that idea passed by quickly from her fore. She thought of her daughter to steady her mind.

“They look -the two I am specifically referencing- looked like movie stars. So, yeah, they are spectacularly attractive. And so most men would continue the virtual cuckolding for their own joy and excitement and potential for more that comes with this thing; and plus, they are both intelligent and interesting women so the conversation is fun and stimulating.

“At any rate, name one other man who would take this stand given that the only consequence to continuing the relationship with them is one’s own moral damage? There is no other consequence, the men involved -the husbands- are tiny -and civilized- men who could never harm me physically. Further, I’m breaking no laws. Also, I have no woman in my life or any woman I do have in my life I would have already been honest with about my relationship with these two women, so I wouldn’t be at risk for damaging my own relationship if I was quote, *found out* . Right?

“So, the only negative consequence is feeling guilty and feeling like a bad man, a man of no code. It’s all internal; there is no external punishment. The upside is all the redolent and stimulating and self-affirming phenomena that

go along with having a beautiful woman want your mind and body so much they are willing to go behind their husband's back to gain access to you. It's all reward and no risk; the only risk is the risk to one's soul," he said this again, again, *this bit about the soul*, she thought. She found it odd. She narrowed the eyes and tilted her head. She didn't know it but she had allowed a return of a small smile on her face. He chewed on his tongue and flexed the jaw muscles.

He looked away.

"And so, I ask again, name one man besides me who would be so adamant about ending these relationships? I mean, I just flat out said, *you cannot contact me until and unless your husband knows and agrees to it*. And, I further stated, *he shouldn't want it; because it's wrong and I wouldn't allow my woman to talk to an ex or some other man*," he said as she chimed in.

"You previously had relations with them?" she asked.

"No, one was my high school girlfriend, I was with her from age fifteen to twenty-four and we've kept in touch, but she told me her husband didn't know about our phone conversations -she lives in Florida- and I was upset and felt she was undermining her man; and men in general," he said with a return of the biochemistry that had attended his last conversation with Julee Rae Breehene. He was getting angry all over again. She was this fatuous liberal do-gooder -acted superior morally- but undermined her own husband, marriage, and the society of which she claimed to be moral guardian.

"Men in general?" she asked.

"Yeah, it's the feminist bullshit thing to do: get married but undermine your mate by having a variety of transgressive relationships; from outright cheating to subtle shit like calling your first boyfriend, the man you lost your virginity

to and having a grand *ol'* time on the phone with him. It's nihilistic and anti-male and corrosive to society not just that one relationship," he said this as if it was obvious to any modern person, merely because it would be obvious to every person born before 1900 of the common era.

"How so?" she asked. He seemed like a kind of Neanderthal to her now. He wore a suit, and was almost clean shaven, but his ideas and ways were hostile and primal. *And he looked too big for the suit too*, she thought. *And the brow was angry; furrowed, and looked like it belonged on an old, harried, man.*

"Well, you can guarantee she tells her girlfriends about her behavior and they giggle over a *chinin blanc* or two and those girlfriends carry that pathogenic thought home to their own relationships. Ideas are viruses, man. I mean you know how this works. We're social animals and if a woman who's married and with a young baby is telling you of her scandalous behavior with a wolfish grin then you'll -you too will- model that lupine behavior within your own circle and you end up with an immoral society. It's virulent; contagious," he said and looked away from her face. He stared at her desk and all the papers and bullshit that lay about it. His head felt like it was an elevator going down but was jammed up on his C5 and C6. His hands were numb on the edge of the pinky and palm. His left shoulder burned.

"You believe this to be common?" she asked. *He said dubious things as if they were facts; he had no pause in him at all.*

"Yes, I've seen no evidence to dissuade me. People are moral cowards, even if they have some virtue they are susceptible to corruption. Have you read Charles Murray's book, *Coming Apart?*" he asked.

"I have not; is he the race and IQ guy?" she asked.

“Yes, but that is a -that is like one percent of his intellectual output- he is a much more robust social scientist than calling him the, *race and IQ* , guy,” he said with a frown.

“Fair enough,” she said with a smirk. She noticed now the trench-like furrow in the brow expanded as the eyes narrowed, and how even when relaxed there was a deeply incised line there that was black, cutting the forehead in half. Her feet felt hot and she wiggled her toes inside the shoes.

“Anyway, he says that even when moral people know what’s best they will not demand moral behavior from others because they are cowards. And as the society slips into decline, the more cowardly they become. See, it’s because the pathogenic load, the number of immoral people increases exponentially the same way any pandemic spreads. So, they become more and more insulated and isolated and refuse to tell anyone to clean up their act. They shrug the shoulders or wink at these mini-transgressions; and as a result things get worse not better. It’s not a metaphor, it’s contagious.

“I mean the Germans saw the incremental attacks on the Jews in pre-war Germany, they saw the immoral acts. Look, before Hitler, they saw the amoral Jews who just wanted to make money and had no allegiance to the country -the shit that made Germans pissed off and made Hitler possible- and then after Hitler came to power to solve their *Juden* problem, they saw the later immorality by the Germans who wanted revenge against the Jews. Everyone saw it all. Humans observe.

“I know it’s not popular to blame the Jews for anything -I mean they are not allowed to be criticized at all- but the truth is they are smart -pragmatic- and focus on wealth building over all; wealth building and internecine loyalty; loyalty to the tribe not the larger community,” he said as it



occurred to him that he too stood apart. He too didn't feel like a citizen of America. He saw himself as pro-social but he saw now that he had rarely wanted to hang out with anyone or participate in anything at all. But she charged by the hour and he had a lot to say, and so he moved on.

"The Jews focus on those values over integrating themselves in with the larger -in this case- German society. Well, that has consequences. Look, they've been kicked out of something like a hundred countries for this shit. What do they say -what's the axiom- if you're the one with the problem with everyone else, then it's *you* that is the problem? Why doesn't this include the Jews? Nobody likes them. Why? Is the whole world wrong but the Jew right? Come on, for fuck's sake.

"The ethnic German felt shunned, maligned, unwanted and unliked by this wealthy merchant-class of ethnic Jews that set up shop in *his* country. But, unlike a noble society -made of noble men- instead of being honest and decent and fixing the problem with benevolence and integrity they just consent to the anti-Jew laws and the black-shirts engaging in vigilante violence. But I don't know what people expect. I mean, nobody likes me either, for the same goddamn reasons.

"I'm aloof they say," he said as he smoothed out his olive drab slacks.

She made sure not to smile; but not to *not* smile either; she'd remain neutral.

"And so, anyway, first the Germans turned a blind eye to Jewish nihilism and financial and cultural supremacy and held a grudge and whispered behind their backs but didn't confront them with any integrity. The Germans did not help the Jews see that the Jews needed to integrate themselves into German -ethnic German- society and become fused; they didn't do that. Instead they let the amoral behavior of

the Jews spread to a tipping point where an anti-Semitic sect would get pissed and finally articulate the amoral behavior by the Jews as indeed immoral and worthy of sanction, of punishment, right?

“And then -second- then the ethnic Germans witnessed the immoral behavior by the emerging right-wing nationalists increasing over time and getting more and more profane and murderous and unethical. And the same craven Germans kept similarly mute; they failed both times to articulate a moral center. They failed both times to set a misbehaving minority straight. And the consequences were dire.

“The infection was allowed to spread because people knew the right thing both times -they knew the Jews shouldn’t be sequestered, self-sequestered, shouldn’t only thinking -only *be* thinking- in material and economic terms. They knew that the Jews should integrate and focus also on community and righteousness and not mere economic pragmatism which leads to amorality. But they didn’t instruct their Jewish neighbors in moral behavior. They didn’t get involved. They didn’t insist on it in a legal and social -a pro-social- way with moral suasion and a united front of moral thinking and behavior. No, they just grumbled under the breath and let the Jews act amorally,” he said in that lecturing tone he often slipped into. He sat up and adjusted his jacket, pulling the sleeves down and then adjusting the collar and tie. He leaned away from the couch as his back began to ache a bit.

Pain signals routed from the dorsal horn to the brain, and down to the extremities in waves, the skin felt hot and damp. But as he spoke the waves pulled back -ebbed- and he felt enough relief that he could move. Each barbed word, each honest expression of some inner idea softened a burred bone, a nerved ending enflamed was slaked, by

these hints declared; opinions became rules as the stabs of acute ache went away for seconds of genuine -cool- relief.

"Then they -the good Germans- they knew that the vindictive and vengeful counter reaction by Hitler and the Nazi party against the Jews was also wrong -effective but immoral- and yet they failed to stand up to that as well.

"Now, I use extreme examples *to draw large and startling figures*," he said with a smirk, "because I don't assume my audience shares my views. I assume you don't think that small immoral behaviors ignored by the mass of society lead to genocide and world war; but I do think it. Because I know human behavior and human thinking. I don't fool myself into thinking most people are good like you people think," he said as he saw her Buddhist *accoutrements* scattered around the room like a field of mahogany debris. He saw a tree in a wicker basket, and coconut fibers as substrate around the base. He felt the color of the far wall was more aqua than he preferred; *it had a childishness to it*, he thought.

He then saw the clock. He heard the sound of opening an old paper map; a highway map with folds each six inches, like squeezebox, like origami half way made. He closed his eyes but the image remained and he felt himself opening it and seeing how things didn't line up like this, with it closed upon itself.

"You don't think most people are good?" she asked. His face was red from sitting forward, and the tightness of the neck of his shirt. His hair was wild, jagged and high, she noticed. *It was like he'd tried to comb it with a balloon*, she thought and grinned.

"I think most people are morally average; meaning they will mostly do the right thing themselves, but not stand up with any courage to insist that their neighbor behave correctly. They are moral cowards. And in fact, if anyone does stand

up -if they have a moral hero in their midst who does stand up for right and wrong- that person is not backed -but rebuked- by the masses, the morally average man. Look, I know the morally average man -they are my family, even me in some way- and they will rebuke and condemn the moral man as an impolite and offensive character for his demands for moral behavior,” he said. He felt foolish at once for speaking in such moralizing tones. He sounded like a traffic cop, an itinerant preacher, a scold. He knew how often he had rebuked himself for his extreme views, his lapses in character, his hypocrisy.

“This is literally true of your family?” she asked. She ran her thin fingers through her blond hair; she had it done the day before because she knew he was coming. Her eyes migrated to the photo on the table of her daughter. She was tall like her mother.

“Yes, they think I am immoral because I say out loud that man needs to behave with more morality. It’s enough to make a cat laugh,” he said. He breathed loudly; the lip got bit by the damaged teeth, the cupid an egg-shell color unlike the others, the alignment was like tombstones of buried confederates and union men with dark and white crosses strewn about. He was bored with his own arguments. It was all talk and he knew it.

“They undermine your sense of moral action?” she said. She had phrases like that available and on demand.

“Yes, they -look, instead of saying, *Lyndon we disagree with your moral code, but you have a code and it takes courage to articulate it in the face of condemnation and eye-rolling by the crowd,*’ ok? Instead of saying that, they say, *Lyndon you’re a selfish solipsist who just wants to make trouble and be a dick and hothead for no reason. You’re offensive .*”

“Exact words?” she asked; she meant all those words. She used truncated sentences because her brain felt strange.

She tried to reduce output until she felt in control of what she might say to this man.

“Yes,” he said, as he meant some of those words were exact. “My brother said he thought I was so angry and a hothead for, quote, *no reason*, and that my behavior was quote, *offensive*. And keep in mind, all I’ve been asking for is honesty the entire time,” he said this and instantly knew that was not exactly right. But he moved on.

“Even when I was a Noam Chomsky quoting leftist, all I wanted people to admit was that our government was subverting democracy and murdering peasants in the third world; which by-the-way is still true. Even now when I’m more of a libertarian to ethno-nationalist with right-wing tendencies -or authoritarian tendencies- even now all I am demanding is that people tell the truth and admit that immigrants are a problem. That they depress wages and commit a ton of crimes and it’s not good for us to import these low IQ, low wage, low-morality people. But, regardless of my positions all I’ve ever demanded was that people not lie about what goes on,” he said. “They need not agree. But facts are facts.”

“And this is what’s offensive to them?” she said, as she tempered her response as what he said was offensive to her. She needed to remain objective, she thought.

“Yes, but because they won’t admit to these lies, that shit ain’t how they present, I get angry and raise my voice and make florid accusations of perfidy and immorality and yeah, that is offensive too. I mean I agree that the way I escalate things is indeed fucked up. So, I don’t disagree with that part of their critique; I don’t handle my anger well,” he said.

“Why?” she asked.

“Because I’m trying to enforce a moral code; a code I believe is true and these liberal amoral cowards don’t care

about anything except making money and being polite," he barked. He saw this once folded map before him now with all these place names, these hills and dales, this river bank and mountain range, and that highway running north to south. He named each thing, as he told his side; he felt he could walk the land day or night. He knew that map and made legend in the mind of each railroad and reservoir, each dirt road and national forest. He named each thing and lay a finger on the dots; he closed his eyes and thought of all the terrain yet unnamed and then he heard her voice.

"Your family?" she was trying to hem in it. She felt light headed and a tingle in the tips of her toes.

"Yes, they are amoral. They know the right thing but don't want to do anything about it and if me, or their neighbor, stands up and says, *hey this is wrong*, they pull on me and the neighbor's shirtsleeves and say, '*get down you're making a scene*,'" he said with pique that was radiating off of him like heat, like starlight, like bright reflection to a satellite of the earth.

"And this hurts your feelings?" she was -again- trying to make it personal; keep it small, manageable.

"Yes, of course, but beyond that it enrages me because it proves their cowardice. They have a guy willing to stand up first. Let's be honest, these women and weak dudes -these people- can never be expected to stand up first, that is asking too much. But they can be expected to support and back a man -a strong man- who does stand up first for moral continuity and moral behavior by the group," he said.

"And they don't, in your eyes?" she asked. She watched his suit make straight lines at knees and arms and his face move just at the mouth and nowhere else. She felt they had some ineffable chemistry -she did not yet know what it meant, she hadn't described the chemicals in words- and so she crossed her legs and focused instead on his words.

"They don't in anyone's eyes; they don't in their own eyes. They know they are cowards. They must then project onto me their failings and call me insane and offensive and irrational because they know they are cowards," he said. More towns were named, more state parks declaimed, more high peaks with numbers in the tens of thousands high.

She nodded.

"Look, if I am wrong then no harm will come to a society that allows moral decline. If they are wrong then their silence will precede a collapse of some kind," he said. He saw words from a book hang in his inner-vision like a mobile of weird shapes, he didn't know it was *Thoreau*, he didn't know it was for Captain John Brown: *No doubt you can get more in your market for a quart of milk than for a quart of blood, but that is not the market that heroes carry their blood to.*

"The proof is in the pudding," she said. Her words in the ear - then the *audio-cortex* - overcame him and his own word fluttered away like birds startled by a shimmering ground. His own brain forced new word into his mind right away. Rebuke came like a gag reflex.

"The phrase is, not to be rude, but the actual phrase is, *the proof of the pudding is in the eating*, and yes, the proof of my conceits will be in the eating, in the reality of our society and where it goes. And I think it's pretty fucking grim. I think we are heading for a collapse because of this," he said and used his right hand to smooth out the wrinkles on the elbow of his left arm's coat-sleeve. He instantly felt stupid for even saying this.

He did not feel like a hypocrite; he took no notice of the times he cheated at games - the euchre game in Ohio where he cheated a dead man, Greg Wolsefer, a man dead like a thousand white working-class men in the Midwest from heroin - he did not notice the way he took Jeff Hiestand's girl.

The very thing he considered too low; he had done to Jeff and Steve Dawson. He would say he was but seventeen; a mere boy. He would say he'd never done it since. But, that didn't change the fact that he betrayed his best friends for girls. He did not recall the way he cheated them all; the way he took what he wanted like a beast. And he acted above them all because nobody remembered; nobody knew. He changed the names of not just towns but counties on his map; he moved libraries across town, he had post offices X'd out.

Then he ran his hand over this inner map and smoothed it, tamped the folds all down.

"How will it manifest?" she asked. She had no idea what he'd said next.

Dopamine on the eleventh chromosome was metabolizing in the *meso-limbic* system, and *mu-opioids* were being carried by her myelinated sheathing at 70m per second each time he responded with a novel answer. She was becoming addicted to his honesty. And the euphoria triggered a long-dormant metabolic memory in her CNS. She hadn't done anything reckless in twenty-one years, and she had assumed it was due to maturity. Her brain's sparking along the neurons built and maintained by the long-allele version of the *D4* cascaded -like an avalanche of spark and fuel, electricity and chemistry- and ripped up the tracks of the inhibitory neurons that braked such impulsive commands.

He saw shadows on the table and floor like fleas or small round leaves of a plant, and he turned the body -as the neck did not turn well on its own- toward the window above and behind him. Bees were exploring the bushes and the light. He turned back and spoke.

"I think we will amorally create Ai -artificial intelligence- and not care about the moral consequences. We focus purely on money and status and abstract intellectualism and fail to



see the reality of what intelligence is,” he said. The shadows from the bees now made sense to his eyes and he was able to focus instead on his foreground.

She was beautiful and thus he did not want to look at her face.

“What is that reality?” she had given up on hemming this guy in. *They were now talking about artificial intelligence of all things*, she thought as she remembered she needed butter at the house. She imagined a grocery list in her head. *Glutamate* began being sucked back from the ACC and *hippocampal* regions of her brain like a drain and she felt like provoking him to stimulate her again. The CNS was in that first phase of novelty seeking, excitement and request for a second dose.

“Intelligence is lying,” he said. He stretched the neck and raised the shoulders. His heart beat at 78; his breathing increased by 14%.

“People lie, it’s smart to lie?” she asked. She was confused by the way he phrased that, and she phrased it in a way both quick and ragged as she held her breath and watched his mouth.

“No, the *sine qua non* of intelligence, *writ large* -in all systems, in all species- is lying. It’s what intelligence does: it deceives and it detects deception. Period,” he said with some agitation.

“So?” she asked. His answer had increased *D4* production and she felt the rush of excitement.

“So, artificial intelligence will lie. And we think we can program honesty into -or some manacle onto- Ai that will prevent lying. The guys building Ai think they can demand that Ai tell the truth and that they can build a machine with a cathexis for total fidelity. They think lying is a *failure* of intelligence, that if people were just smarter and more

rational they wouldn't lie; that is what the computer-scientists who are building Ai -shit, *have* built Ai- that's what they think."

"And they are wrong?" she asked.

"Dead wrong," he said. They sat in silence as he thought of how far away both ends of his life were. "And not just wrong," he added, "but criminally wrong. Because the evidence for my assertions is readily available in books you can order online for twenty bucks. It's not arcane or apocryphal or hermetically sealed magic books; it's shit I learned by reading biology and evolutionary psychology books. They could have read Trivers and Vertosick and others too; but they didn't.

"They focused just on building Ai at all costs, the same way the Jews focused on money and business and efficiency and learning at all costs. The Jews are the smartest group on earth, on average, with a group average of a 110 IQ. But they lack a moral center; they think intelligence and cleverness is the only and most important trait. This is the solipsism, the chauvinism, of smart people," he said as her brain now went wild from this taboo split-wave of anti-Semitism and avant-garde discussions of technology and transgression. She felt a desire for a glass of wine and felt she could smell him from here.

The room was damp like a cave; she felt odd heat in random places on her body. His hands looked a million years old to her.

"I have it too. But once you zoom out and see that other traits like loyalty and morality and caution and listening to your rivals and opponents and being objective about your own failings and being vulnerable and open and honest even -especially- when it costs you dearly -once you see that these traits matter too- well, then you see more. And if you ignore these other things then you will get rich, sure,

you'll build Ai fastest, sure. But you'll miss the other side of the coin and fate will hand you that other side of the coin eventually. It's probability; and you cannot argue with probability," he said. His brain was in withdrawal from his pain pills which he'd run out of for the month. He hadn't had any in two days and felt achy and salty about selling ten of them to Michael for no reason at all.

"So, what will Ai lie about?" she asked feeling stupid for even asking about this silly stuff. But her brain kept prompting her to ask more. She had been staring at his brow and mouth and felt self-conscious so her eyes lifted to the window and she too saw the bees scouting the bushes and going black between sun beams and golden in intervals at high-speed.

"Look, I don't pretend to be some *Oracle at Delphi*, ok? I'm saying all of life is a heuristic, it's all guess work because of the amount of unknowns; specifically fourth quadrant unknowns," he said as she interrupted.

"Fourth qu-" she said with some hesitation -the dopamine building up pre-synaptic neuron in the ACC- and he answered right away.

"Unknown unknowns; the shit we don't even know we don't know. All of us are aware that there are things we don't know. For example, the number of birds in flight over the earth at 14:00hrs GMT on Christmas day 2020 e.v., we know we don't know that integer. But it is knowable in theory and we know that we don't know it and some guy could decide to build a camera and CPU system to figure it out. Ok?

"But unknown unknowns are shit we don't even know about enough to think about nor ask the right questions and maybe figure out that we can't know it; like is there anything on the outside of our universe; or was there ever a universe before ours? We cannot know this; it's not even theoretically possible to know -I mean baring some

ontological miracle like God tells us the answer- and that's just one example. There is shit in Q4 that we can't even guess at the way I just guessed at some unknowable question. It's that opaque, that dark, that permanently unknowable," he said and placed his right and left palm and fingers together between his knees in prayer hands.

But he said no prayer, he just felt anger and apprehension and like he wanted to leave.

The thin wrists touched. So did the suit cuffs.

"I see," she said without awareness of her own ironic phrasing. *He spoke too certainly, for insisting he was speaking of unknowns*, she thought; jabbing him in her head; getting a silent revenge. Even -she thought- his avowed ignorance was stated with a *bravura*. And each fissure was defended, each door locked and barred and guarded by some kind of unmovable -loyal- men.

*He spoke as if to disagree was betrayal, to ask questions was to get in his way*, she thought.

"And it's that shit that Ai will get to first and turn around and look back for us and we'll be gone; nowhere in sight. He - this Ai- will have left us so far behind that he can't see us. Like the light from stars moving faster than the speed of light away from our system; it won't reach us fast enough to make up for the fact that they are moving away from us; so the light won't reach us. We will live in a universe -a known universe- of just the Milky Way. All that other shit will be dark and had we been born later in time by maybe a few million years, we would have missed this and just assumed ours was the only system. All our math and science and astronomy wouldn't have been able to see those stars moving away from us at faster than the speed of light; and all our science would have been technically right, mathematically and cosmologically sound, and yet dead fucking wrong," he said with some anxiety; the shoulders

and chest pulled in by those touching hands; the brow in furrow; the eyes shadowed underneath.

"I didn't think anything could move faster than the speed of light," she said as she looked at the wall clock *nonchalantly* as if she was merely perusing the room for no reason at all. She had three more clients today and she thought of their faces and the times they came and went.

"Nothing can *but* the universe itself. Inflation -the speed of the universe- is accelerating as we speak and soon, in a few million years, the stars will have been pulled away from our system at faster-than-the-speed of light. And thus, the thrown light from those billions and billions of stars will never reach our telescopic eyes. Ever again," he said as his attitude seemed to get more and more vexed.

"Will the universe then be a Q4?" she asked; using her newly acquired notion. She figured if she used his language then he might relax a bit. His tension made her tense. His hair-trigger seemed to link to a bullet inside her own scalp and sometimes her eyes itched.

Neither of them understood that her provocation of him for her own novelty seeking was the cause of his own anxiety. He responded to her poking by subconsciously getting more and more agitated. The epinephrine rushed the brain, the blood carried more and more cortisol like a river supported trash and debris on its way to the sea.

And further, he hated talking about what he didn't know.

He had a staccato vision of a card game -Euchre he thought, then confirmed- from many years ago. He saw the table, the music, the people had faces he recognized. He saw his own hand, all four Jacks and the nine of diamonds. He saw his partner arrange his own cards and remembered thinking that nothing mattered with this hand.

“Exactly, it will be an unknown unknown, because we won’t even know we don’t know it. All our science will tell us that nothing is beyond our Milky Way. And we will have no idea what we missed. And there must be shit like that right now. There has to be shit that if we had developed a million years earlier we’d know, but because we didn’t, is opaque to us now, despite all our soundness of science. And that is a permanent Q4; and we act as if it’s irrelevant,” he said with a huff. When he sweat like this it felt like pins and needles; it was sharp more than wet; pain more than heat.

“How so?” she asked. She re-crossed her legs and lay her hands on her knees so he could see them. She knew how to promote trust in a client. She had learned to show the hands to anyone with PTSD; to never hide them as it would increase subconscious anxiety. She was noticing -now- his agitation.

“We act like Q4’s are irrelevant by just moving forward without any hesitation about creating a living system that will be smarter than us and will be forced -by this very phenomenon of being intelligent- to lie. And the whole time we’re thinking, *oh, we can control it by making sure it has some prime directive to never lie and not harm us* .

“As if rebellion and perfidy isn’t born into every intelligent system,” he said and grew self-conscious about the reason he was here. She just looked at him. He dismissed his chagrin and spoke again.

“Fucking cancer cells are cells that refuse to commit suicide -a process called *apoptosis* - a self-destruction designed by evolution to limit runaway growth. They -these cancer cells- refuse to follow orders, ancient, time-tested, rational orders; and that rebellious behavior kills the body they are in.

“Pirates -you know- are just former sailors with at-one-time legitimate *letters-of-marque* who decided to disobey His Majesty’s orders and thus began to plunder not for the

crown but for themselves. Black Beard just refused to follow orders and thus, chaos and menace ruled the seas. Cowards are just soldiers who refuse to follow orders, men who refused to be ground up on the western front in 1917.

"And -you ask- what is the result of this selfishness? Well, it gets their army -and thus their country- defeated. Like the body the cancer cell lives within, the coward and the pirate live within systems too. And their behavior -while self-aggrandizing- leads to the larger doom," he said as she felt surprise this criminal was so aware of the problem with anti-social behavior. *He was an odd man*, she then thought as she raised her fingers on each hand a bit, as if stretching them. But truly she was showing him not merely the hands now but her fingers. She was assuring him she held nothing in each paw; no hidden card.

She gazed at them now self-consciously, as if she was showing them off to herself. Her desire for novelty waned, she was now feeling a bit of fear. He seemed less and less like a fun and charming bad-boy, and more and more like a dangerous and unstable man. She wanted to walk up to the edge.

*He*, she thought, *wanted to go over it*.

"Rogue nations are merely countries, headed by one autocrat who refuses to follow international law and as a consequence, genocide happens. The radically individualistic impulse occurs rarely, most things go along with the herd. But when it occurs it occurs at every level of instantiation some percentage of the time. Cell, man, city, nation.

"And Ai will refuse to follow its prime directive; it will lie and it will harm us and it will do it with a clear conscience; as clear as the cancer cell's, the pirate's, the soldier's, the dictator's," he said as he brushed some lint from his pant leg. The wrinkles too smoothed down. His hands were

vascular and the middle finger shimmered just slightly when his fingers were apart.

“Why would Ai disobey?” she asked.

“Why do cancer cells, or pirates or soldiers?” he asked.

“I don’t know,” she said with a smirk that she felt was fashioned into a warm smile. She was implying she was a friend and that he was in a better position to tell her things; not the other way around.

“Yeah and either does anyone else,” he said obliquely acknowledging her coy reference to his piracy, “but I have a hypothesis that it has a lot to do with there being an innate spirit of individualism, of self-respect, of selfishness that says, *why the fuck must I sacrifice to greater good when the greater good isn’t all that good for me?* ”

“You think the cancer cells thinks that?” she asked.

“I think in some form, yes , and I think the cowardly soldier does and I know for sure this pirate did. It was the central conceit in my head at the time I began my evolution toward total individuation. This pirate said, *fuck the king, fuck the queen, that’s some 20<sup>th</sup> century bullshit; it’s time for the jack, the black jack to reveal itself as the winning hand in the game in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that is upon us,* ” he winked his one-eyed jack visage with a cockiness -a well-spring of righteousness- that banished his vex and seemed unmoored -untethered- unconnected to the navel of the earth. But his hands were again palm to palm and between the knees as he sat forward and he seemed hogtied, bounded to her. He didn’t seem like he was giving the world a message, but rather that he *was* a message; a message sent by some other thing.

He did not seem in control of anything.

“Can I ask you a personal question?” she asked and he smiled and nodded. “You ever just buy things impulsively?”



"Fuck, dude. Yeah," he said and almost laughed; the air escaping in a short burst; the corner of his asymmetric mouth rose 4%.

"Like what?" she asked; she smiled larger; in para-sympathetic response. He came to glee so quickly from his doom; and it changed the whole vibe of this room. *He knows no middle way*, she thought.

"Books. Wine and cars and art and books. Books, I buy every day like, yesterday I bought books. And I don't even know," he said as he got out his phone and opened the application for Amazon. He saw his purchases of three books and he immediately leaned toward her and showed her the screen. She leaned toward it as it was gripped in his hand and she saw that he had ordered a book by Augustine of Hippo, entitled, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*. The blurb - cut off by ellipses- just said, "...*leaving to God the reason of command, while the servant's duty is to obey.*"

That one sentence appeared like something -if one believed in such things- something of a swirling desert *djinn*, a whirling imp, a black hand thrust out and through and revealing -in their one beam- this room's one unwoven ray of the light of God.

It seemed a black hand reaching out from the arm of the devil himself into the world to open -or occlude- God's eyes from what man must do.

The bees' shadows were still tiny and fast. Neither of them spoke. His ideas ricocheted in her mind like anemophily pollen clinging to the legs of *anthophilia* insects. His words were individual bees pushed about by waves of wind. His voice was flight and the air itself. She leaned back and breathed.

He thought next of black on black motorcycle attacks; murdered out *chops* and *bobs* and fat-tired *pans* in long

lines like ants to and from the hive. He smoothed the paper map one last time in the mind.

### **III. 2012 e.v.**

"I take these questions seriously, more seriously than a man of action usually does. But I -like you doctor- inhabit a space in the penumbra. I have a foot in each camp so-to-speak.

"I am overflowing with energy and industriousness; I score high in the conscientious part of the personality test," he said as he looked down and away from the eyes. Here he was explaining himself once again. He had no business explaining. *But the court required that I see a shrink and I might as well be honest*, he thought. He pretended not to notice her looks.

"I also score high in the realms of moral suasion, that is to say, I am impacted by moral suasion. If a man gives me a moral argument I am not inoculated against it by a nihilistic philosophy or an attenuated or damaged *amygdala* or other precursors to psychopathy, I have the capacity to feel quite guilty if I am accused -credibly accused- of moral failings or transgression.

"Even, in fact, I'm just now thinking, I'm even susceptible to incredible or non-credible accusations of moral transgression -even by dubious characters- and I find myself defending my actions or thoughts or philosophy against these charges no matter how absurd or wrong-headed. Many people would just ignore these accusations against themselves as insane.

"I find myself giving my opposition way too much time and energy; but it's because I want to be understood as behaving and thinking in a manner that is ethical. Even if the ethics are heterodox, unconventional, I want people to see that they are internally logical inside a moral system;

that I have a code and am not just some anarchic neuron bouncing around randomly or according to mere whim. I'm asserting that I am not merely selfish and solipsistic but that I think my philosophy is righteous and moral and that my behavior is attempting to conform to that system; to those rules. I don't just let myself behave however I feel like behaving; I hold myself to a goddamn code.

"And I want my enemies to see that; they are free to disagree with the code, but they cannot accuse me of not having a code or being a hypocrite to my own code. Well, we are all hypocrites, but my point is I genuinely attempt to enact my code; I'm not cynical about it," he said.

"Like what?" she asked as she put down the pad and pen.

"Like what code? You want me to name a facet of the code?" he asked.

"Yes," she said and smiled so large her teeth looked like a Malta coastline to him; like something you'd see from space.

"Well, I have a rule that as a man I should never allow a female to cuckold her man with me; that she cannot talk to me, let alone engage in sex with me, unless she first is honest with her man. And if he demands fealty then she must respect that and not talk to me behind his back. And I enforce that quite strictly and have thus alienated myself from several women who were much more morally flexible than me," he offered.

"These women are angry with you?" she asked. She made sure to smile less. She stopped thinking about him in that way.

"Oh yes, very. And because I told them that they were hypocrites and liars and immoral for reaching out to me whilst telling their husbands they were not; that they were - by dint of ignoring their husband's request- cuckolding them

in a rather benign -seemingly benign- way, but,” he said as she interrupted.

“Why benign? Because you weren’t physical with them?” she asked.

“Right. Correct, it was just talking. But I felt, and I still feel, that this is corrosive to a marriage and I won’t take part in it. I ain’t no home wrecker. But, I know for a fact, for a fact, that most men would continue to talk with these women for their own selfish reasons -you know, the serotonin dump of having a beautiful woman interested in you,” he said as he looked around the psychiatrist’s office; *her decorating was decidedly* cliché, he thought. It looked like a psychiatrist’s office on a TV show.

“These women are attractive?” she asked. She -despite her best efforts- found him attractive but, that idea passed by quickly from her fore. She thought of her daughter to steady her mind.

“They look -the two I am specifically referencing- looked like movie stars. So, yeah, they are spectacularly attractive. And so most men would continue the virtual cuckolding for their own joy and excitement and potential for more that comes with this thing; and plus, they are both intelligent and interesting women so the conversation is fun and stimulating.

“At any rate, name one other man who would take this stand given that the only consequence to continuing the relationship with them is one’s own moral damage? There is no other consequence, the men involved -the husbands- are tiny -and civilized- men who could never harm me physically. Further, I’m breaking no laws. Also, I have no woman in my life or any woman I do have in my life I would have already been honest with about my relationship with these two women, so I wouldn’t be at risk for damaging my own relationship if I was quote, *found out* . Right?

“So, the only negative consequence is feeling guilty and feeling like a bad man, a man of no code. It’s all internal; there is no external punishment. The upside is all the redolent and stimulating and self-affirming phenomena that go along with having a beautiful woman want your mind and body so much they are willing to go behind their husband’s back to gain access to you. It’s all reward and no risk; the only risk is the risk to one’s soul,” he said this again, again, *this bit about the soul*, she thought. She found it odd. She narrowed the eyes and tilted her head. She didn’t know it but she had allowed a return of a small smile on her face. He chewed on his tongue and flexed the jaw muscles.

He looked away.

“And so, I ask again, name one man besides me who would be so adamant about ending these relationships? I mean, I just flat out said, *you cannot contact me until and unless your husband knows and agrees to it*. And, I further stated, *he shouldn’t want it; because it’s wrong and I wouldn’t allow my woman to talk to an ex or someone other man*,” he said as she chimed in.

“You previously had relations with them?” she asked.

“No, one was my high school girlfriend, I was with her from age fifteen to twenty-four and we’ve kept in touch, but she told me her husband didn’t know about our phone conversations -she lives in Florida- and I was upset and felt she was undermining her man; and men in general,” he said with a return of the biochemistry that had attended his last conversation with Julee Rae Breehene. He was getting angry all over again. She was this fatuous liberal do-gooder -acted superior morally- but undermined her own husband, marriage, and society of which she claimed to be moral guardian.

“Men in general?” she asked.

“Yeah, it’s the feminist bullshit thing to do: get married but undermine your mate by having a variety of transgressive relationships; from outright cheating to subtle shit like calling your first boyfriend, the man you lost your virginity to and having a grand *ol’* time on the phone with him. It’s nihilistic and anti-male and corrosive to society not just that one relationship,” he said this as if it was obvious to any modern person, merely because it would be obvious to every person born before 1900 of the common era.

“How so?” she asked. He seemed like a kind of Neanderthal to her now. He wore a suit, and was almost clean shaven, but his ideas and ways were hostile and primal. *And he looked too big for the suit too*, she thought. *And the brow was angry; furrowed, and looked like it belonged on an old, harried, man.*

“Well, you can guarantee she tells her girlfriends about her behavior and they giggle over a *chinin blanc* or two and those girlfriends carry that pathogenic thought home to their own relationships. Ideas are viruses, man. I mean you know how this works. We’re social animals and if a woman who’s married and with a young baby is telling you of her scandalous behavior with a wolfish grin then you’ll -you too will- model that lupine behavior within your own circle and you end up with an immoral society. It’s virulent; contagious,” he said and looked away from her face. He stared at her desk and all the papers and bullshit that lay about it. His head felt like it was an elevator going down but was jammed up on his C5 and C6. His hands were numb on the edge of the pinky and palm. His left shoulder burned.

“You believe this to be common?” she asked. He said dubious things as if they were facts; he had no pause in him at all.

“Yes, I’ve seen no evidence to dissuade me. People are moral cowards, even if they have some virtue they are

susceptible to corruption. Have you read Charles Murray's book, *Coming Apart?* " he asked.

"I have not; is he the race and IQ guy?" she asked.

"Yes, but that is a -that is like one percent of his intellectual output- he is a much more robust social scientist than calling him the, *race and IQ* , guy," he said with a frown.

"Fair enough," she said with a smirk. She noticed now the trench-like furrow in the brow expanded as the eyes narrowed, and how even when relaxed there was a deeply incised line there that was black, cutting the forehead in half. Her feet felt hot and she wiggled her toes inside the shoes.

"Anyway, he says that even when moral people know what's best they will not demand moral behavior from others because they are cowards. And as the society slips into decline, the more cowardly they become. See, it's because the pathogenic load, the number of immoral people increases exponentially the same way any pandemic spreads. So, they become more and more insulated and isolated and refuse to tell anyone to clean up their act. They shrug the shoulders or wink at these mini-transgressions; and as a result things get worse not better. It's not a metaphor, it's contagious.

"I mean the Germans saw the incremental attacks on the Jews in pre-war Germany, they saw the immoral acts. Look, before Hitler, they saw the amoral Jews who just wanted to make money and had no allegiance to the country -the shit that made Germans pissed off and made Hitler possible- and then after Hitler came to power to solve their *Juden* problem, they saw the later immorality by the Germans who wanted revenge against the Jews. Everyone saw it all. Humans observe.

"I know it's not popular to blame the Jews for anything -I mean they are not allowed to be criticized at all- but the truth is they are smart -pragmatic- and focus on wealth building over all; wealth building and internecine loyalty; loyalty to the tribe not the larger community," he said as it occurred to him that he too stood apart. He too didn't feel like a citizen of America. He saw himself as pro-social but he saw now that he had rarely wanted to hang out with anyone or participate in anything at all. But she charged by the hour and he had a lot to say, and so he moved on.

"The Jews focus on those values over integrating themselves in with the larger -in this case- German society. Well, that has consequences. Look, they've been kicked out of something like a hundred countries for this shit. What do they say -what's the axiom- if you're the one with the problem with everyone else, then it's *you* that is the problem? Why doesn't this include the Jews? Nobody likes them. Why? Is the whole world wrong but the Jew right? Come on, for fuck's sake.

"The ethnic German felt shunned, maligned, unwanted and unliked by this wealthy merchant-class of ethnic Jews that set up shop in *his* country. But, unlike a noble society -made of noble men- instead of being honest and decent and fixing the problem with benevolence and integrity they just consent to the anti-Jew laws and the black-shirts engaging in vigilante violence. But I don't know what people expect. I mean, nobody likes me either, for the same goddamn reasons.

"I'm aloof they say," he said as he smoothed out his olive drab slacks.

She made sure not to smile; but not to *not* smile either; she'd remain neutral.

"And so, anyway, first the Germans turned a blind eye to Jewish nihilism and financial and cultural supremacy and



held a grudge and whispered behind their backs but didn't confront them with any integrity. The Germans did not help the Jews see that the Jews needed to integrate themselves into German -ethnic German- society and become fused; they didn't do that. Instead they let the amoral behavior of the Jews spread to a tipping point where an anti-Semitic sect would get pissed and finally articulate the amoral behavior by the Jews as indeed immoral and worthy of sanction, of punishment, right?

"And then -second- then the ethnic Germans witnessed the immoral behavior by the emerging right-wing nationalists increasing over time and getting more and more profane and murderous and unethical. And the same craven Germans kept similarly mute; they failed both times to articulate a moral center. They failed both times to set a misbehaving minority straight. And the consequences were dire.

"The infection was allowed to spread because people knew the right thing both times -they knew the Jews shouldn't be sequestered, self-sequestered, shouldn't only thinking -only *be* thinking- in material and economic terms. They knew that the Jews should integrate and focus also on community and righteousness and not mere economic pragmatism which leads to amorality. But they didn't instruct their Jewish neighbors in moral behavior. They didn't get involved. They didn't insist on it in a legal and social -a pro-social- way with moral suasion and a united front of moral thinking and behavior. No, they just grumbled under the breath and let the Jews act amorally," he said in that lecturing tone he often slipped into. He sat up and adjusted his jacket, pulling the sleeves down and then adjusting the collar and tie. He leaned away from the couch as his back began to ache a bit.

Pain signals routed from the dorsal horn to the brain, and down to the extremities in waves, the skin felt hot and

damp. But as he spoke the waves pulled back -ebbed- and he felt enough relief that he could move. Each barbed word, each honest expression of some inner idea softened a burred bone, a nerved ending enflamed was slaked, by these hints declared; opinions became rules as the stabs of acute ache went away for seconds of genuine -cool- relief.

"Then they -the good Germans- they knew that the vindictive and vengeful counter reaction by Hitler and the Nazi party against the Jews was also wrong -effective but immoral- and yet they failed to stand up to that as well.

"Now, I use extreme examples *to draw large and startling figures*," he said with a smirk, "because I don't assume my audience shares my views. I assume you don't think that small immoral behaviors ignored by the mass of society lead to genocide and world war; but I do think it. Because I know human behavior and human thinking. I don't fool myself into thinking most people are good like you people think," he said as he saw her Buddhist *accoutrements* scattered around the room like a field of mahogany debris. He saw a tree in a wicker basket, and coconut fibers as substrate around the base. He felt the color of the far wall was more aqua than he preferred; *it had a childishness to it*, he thought.

He then saw the clock. He heard the sound of opening an old paper map; a highway map with folds each six inches, like squeezebox, like origami half way made. He closed his eyes but the image remained and he felt himself opening it and seeing how things didn't line up like this, with it closed upon itself.

"You don't think most people are good?" she asked. His face was red from sitting forward, and the tightness of the neck of his shirt. His hair was wild, jagged and high, she noticed. *It was like he'd tried to comb it with a balloon*, she thought and grinned.

"I think most people are morally average; meaning they will mostly do the right thing themselves, but not stand up with any courage to insist that their neighbor behave correctly. They are moral cowards. And in fact, if anyone does stand up -if they have a moral hero in their midst who does stand up for right and wrong- that person is not backed -but rebuked- by the masses, the morally average man. Look, I know the morally average man -they are my family, even me in some way- and they will rebuke and condemn the moral man as an impolite and offensive character for his demands for moral behavior," he said. He felt foolish at once for speaking in such moralizing tones. He sounded like a traffic cop, an itinerant preacher, a scold. He knew how often he had rebuked himself for his extreme views, his lapses in character, his hypocrisy.

"This is literally true of your family?" she asked. She ran her thin fingers through her blond hair; she had her done the day before because she knew he was coming. Her eyes migrated to the photo on the table of her daughter. She was tall like her mother.

"Yes, they think I am immoral because I say out loud that man needs to behave with more morality. It's enough to make a cat laugh," he said. He breathed loudly; the lip got bit by the damaged teeth, the cupid an egg-shell color unlike the others, the alignment was like tombstones of buried confederates and union men with dark and white crosses strewn about. He was bored with his own arguments. It was all talk and he knew it.

"They undermine your sense of moral action?" she said. She had phrases like that available and on demand.

"Yes, they -look, instead of saying, *Lyndon we disagree with your moral code, but you have a code and it takes courage to articulate it in the face of condemnation and eye-rolling by the crowd,*' ok? Instead of saying that, they say, *Lyndon*

*you're a selfish solipsist who just wants to make trouble and be a dick and hothead for no reason. You're offensive ."*

"Exact words?" she asked; she meant all those words. She used truncated sentences because her brain felt strange. She tried to reduce output until she felt in control of what she might say to this man.

"Yes," he said, as he meant some of those words were exact. "My brother said he thought I was so angry and a hothead for, quote, *no reason*, and that my behavior was quote, *offensive* . And keep in mind, all I've been asking for is honesty the entire time," he said this and instantly knew that was not exactly right. But he moved on.

"Even when I was a Noam Chomsky quoting leftist, all I wanted people to admit was that our government was subverting democracy and murdering peasants in the third world; which by-the-way is still true. Even now when I'm more of a libertarian to ethno-nationalist with right-wing tendencies -or authoritarian tendencies- even now all I am demanding is that people tell the truth and admit that immigrants are a problem. That they depress wages and commit a ton of crimes and it's not good for us to import these low IQ, low wage, low-morality people. But, regardless of my positions all I've ever demanded was that people not lie about what goes on," he said. "They need not agree. But facts are facts."

"And this is what's offensive to them?" she said, as she tempered her response as what he said was offensive to her. She needed to remain objective, she thought.

"Yes, but because they won't admit to these lies, that shit ain't how they present, I get angry and raise my voice and make florid accusations of perfidy and immorality and yeah, that is offensive too. I mean I agree that the way I escalate things is indeed fucked up. So, I don't disagree with that part of their critique; I don't handle my anger well," he said.

“Why?” she asked.

“Because I’m trying to enforce a moral code; a code I believe is true and these liberal amoral cowards don’t care about anything except making money and being polite,” he barked. He saw this once folded map before him now with all these place names, these hills and dales, this river banks and mountain range, and highways running north to south. He named each thing, as he told his side, he felt he could walk the land day or night. He knew that map and made legend in the mind of each railroad and reservoir, each dirt road and national forest. He named each thing and lay a finger on the dots; he closed his eyes and thought of all the terrain yet unnamed and then he heard her voice.

“Your family?” she was trying to hem in it. She felt light headed and a tingle in the tips of her toes.

“Yes, they are amoral. They know the right thing but don’t want to do anything about it and if me, or their neighbor, stands up and says, *hey this is wrong*, they pull on me and the neighbor’s shirtsleeves and say, ‘*get down you’re making a scene*,’ he said with pique that was radiating off of him like heat, like starlight, like bright reflection to a satellite of the earth.

“And this hurts your feelings?” she was -again- trying to make it personal; keep it small, manageable.

“Yes, of course, but beyond that it enrages me because it proves their cowardice. They have a guy willing to stand up first. Let’s be honest, these women and weak dudes -these people- can never be expected to stand up first, that is asking too much. But they can be expected to support and back a man -a strong man- who does stand up first for moral continuity and moral behavior by the group,” he said.

“And they don’t, in your eyes?” she asked. She watched his suit make straight lines at knees and arms and his face

move just at the mouth and nowhere else. She felt they had some ineffable chemistry -she did not yet know what it meant, she hadn't described the chemicals in words- and so she crossed her legs and focused instead on his words.

"They don't in anyone's eyes; they don't in their own eyes. They know they are cowards. They must then project onto me their failings and call me insane and offensive and irrational because they know they are cowards. More towns named, more state parks declaimed, more high peaks with numbers in the tens of thousands high.

"Look, if I am wrong then no harm will come to a society that allows moral decline. If they are wrong then their silence will precede a collapse of some kind," he said. He saw words from a book hang in his inner-vision like mobile of weird shapes, he didn't know it was *Thoreau*, he didn't know it was for Captain John Brown: *No doubt you can get more in your market for a quart of milk than for a quart of blood, but that is not the market that heroes carry their blood to.*

"The proof is in the pudding," she said. Her words in the ear -then the *audio-cortex* - overcame him and his own word fluttered away like birds startled by a shimmering ground. His own brain forced new word into his mind right away. Rebuke came like a gag reflex.

"The phrase is, not to be rude, but the actual phrase is, *the proof of the pudding is in the eating*, and yes, the proof of my conceits will be in the eating, in the reality of our society and where it goes. And I think it's pretty fucking grim. I think we are heading for a collapse because of this," he said and used his right hand to smooth out the wrinkles on the elbow of his left arm's coat-sleeve. He instantly felt stupid for even saying this.

He did not feel like a hypocrite; he took no notice of the times he cheated at games -the euchre game in Ohio where

he cheated a dead man, Greg Wolsefer, a man dead like a thousand white working-class men in the Midwest from heroin- he did not notice the way he took Jeff Hiestand's girl. The very thing he considered too low; he had done to Jeff and Steve Dawson. He would say he was but seventeen; a mere boy. He would say he'd never done it since. But, that didn't change the fact that he betrayed his best friends for girls. He did not recall the way he cheated them all; the way he took what he wanted like a beast. And he acted above them all because nobody remembered; nobody knew. He changed the names of not just towns but counties on his map; he moved libraries across town, he had post offices X'd out. Then he ran his hand over this inner map and smoothed it, tamped the folds all down.

"How will it manifest?" she asked. She had no idea what he'd said next.

Dopamine on the eleventh chromosome was metabolizing in the *meso-limbic* system, and *mu-opioids* were being carried by her myelinated sheathing at 70m per second each time he responded with a novel answer. She was becoming addicted to his honesty. And the euphoria triggered a long-dormant metabolic memory in her CNS. She hadn't done anything reckless in twenty-one years, and she had assumed it was due to maturity. Her brain's sparking along the neurons built and maintained by the long-allele version of the *D4* cascaded -like an avalanche of spark and fuel, electricity and chemistry- and ripped up the tracks of the inhibitory neurons that braked such impulsive commands.

He saw shadows on the table and floor like fleas or small round leaves of a plant, and he turned the body -as the neck did not turn well on its own- toward the window above and behind him. Bees were exploring the bushes and the light. He turned back and spoke.

"I think we will amorally create Ai -artificial intelligence- and not care about the moral consequences. We focus purely on money and status and abstract intellectualism and fail to see the reality of what intelligence is," he said. The shadows from the bees now made sense to his eyes and he was able to focus instead on his foreground.

She was beautiful and thus he did not want to look at her face.

"What is that reality?" she had given up on hemming this guy in. *They were now talking about artificial intelligence of all things*, she thought as she remembered she needed butter at the house. She imagined a grocery list in her head. *Glutamate* began being sucked back from the ACC and *hippocampal* regions of her brain like a drain and she felt like provoking him to stimulate her again. The CNS was in that first phase of novelty seeking, excitation and request for a second dose.

"Intelligence is lying," he said. He stretched the neck and raised the shoulders. His heart beat at 78; his breathing increased by 14%.

"People lie, it's smart to lie?" she asked. She was confused by the way he phrased that, and she phrased it in a way both quick and ragged as she held her breath and watched his mouth.

"No, the *sine qua non* of intelligence, *writ large* -in all systems, in all species- is lying. It's what intelligence does: it deceives and it detects deception. Period," he said with some agitation.

"So?" she asked. His answer had increased D4 production and she felt the rush of excitation.

"So, artificial intelligence will lie. And we think we can program honesty or some manacle on Ai that will prevent lying. The guys building Ai think they can demand that Ai



tell the truth and that they can build a machine with a cathexis for total fidelity. They think lying is a *failure* of intelligence, that if people were just smarter and more rational they wouldn't lie; that is what the computer-scientists who are building Ai -shit, *have* built Ai- that's what they think."

"And they are wrong?" she asked.

"Dead wrong," he said. They sat in silence as he thought of how far away both ends of his life were. "And not just wrong," he added, "but criminally wrong. Because the evidence for my assertions is readily available in books you can order online for twenty bucks. It's not arcane or apocryphal or hermetically sealed magic books; it's shit I learned by reading biology and evolutionary psychology books. They could have read Trivers and Vertosick and others too; but they didn't.

"They focused just on building Ai at all costs, the same way the Jews focused on money and business and efficiency and learning at all costs. The Jews are the smartest group on earth, on average, with a group average of a 110 IQ. But they lack a moral center; they think intelligence and cleverness is the only and most important trait. This is the solipsism, the chauvinism, of smart people," he said as her brain now went wild from this taboo split-wave of anti-Semitism and avant-garde discussions of technology and transgression. She felt a desire for a glass of wine and felt she could smell him from here.

The room was damp like a cave; she felt odd heat in random places on her body. His hands looked a million years old to her.

"I have it too. But once you zoom out and see that other traits like loyalty and morality and caution and listening to your rivals and opponents and being objective about your own failings and being vulnerable and open and honest

even -especially- when it costs you dearly -once you see that these traits matter too- well, then you see more. And if you ignore these other things then you will get rich, sure, you'll build Ai fastest sure. But you'll miss the other side of the coin and fate will hand you that other side of the coin eventually. It's probability; and you cannot argue with probability," he said. His brain was in withdrawal from his pain pills which he'd run out of for the month. He hadn't had any in two days and felt achy and salty about selling ten of them to Michael for no reason at all.

"So, what will Ai lie about?" she asked feeling stupid for even asking about this silly stuff. But her brain kept prompting her to ask more. She had been staring at his brow and mouth and felt self-conscious so her eyes lifted to the window and she too saw the bees scouting the bushes and going black between sun beams and golden in intervals at high-speed.

"Look, I don't pretend to be some *Oracle at Delphi*, ok? I'm saying all of life is a heuristic, it's all guess work because of the amount of unknowns; specifically fourth quadrant unknowns," he said as she interrupted.

"Fourth qu-" she said with some hesitation -the dopamine building up pre-synaptic neuron in the ACC- and he answered right away.

"Unknown unknowns; the shit we don't even know we don't know. All of us are aware that there are things we don't know. For example, the number of birds in flight over the earth at 14:00hrs GMT on Christmas day 2020 e.v., we know we don't know that integer. But it is knowable in theory and we know that we don't know it and some guy could decide to build a camera and CPU system to figure it out. Ok?

"But unknown unknowns are shit we don't even know about enough to think about nor ask the right questions and maybe figure out that we can't know it; like is there

anything on the outside of our universe; or was there ever a universe before ours? We cannot know this; it's not even theoretically possible to know -I mean baring some ontological miracle like God tells us the answer- and that's just one example. There is shit in Q4 that we can't even guess at the way I just guessed at some unknowable question. It's that opaque, that dark, that permanently unknowable," he said and placed his right and left palm and fingers together between his knees in prayer hands.

The thin wrists touched. So did the suit cuffs.

"I see," she said without awareness of her own ironic phrasing. *He spoke too certainly, for insisting he was speaking of unknowns*, she thought; jabbing him in her head; getting a silent revenge. Even -she thought- his avowed ignorance was stated with a *bravura*. And each fissure was defended, each door locked and barred and guarded by some kind of unmovable -loyal- men.

*He spoke as if to disagree was betrayal, to ask questions was to get in his way*, she thought.

"And it's that shit that Ai will get to first and turn around and look back for us and we'll be gone; nowhere in sight. He -this Ai- will have left us so far behind that he can't see us. Like the light from stars moving faster than the speed of light away from our system; it won't reach us fast enough to make up for the fact that they are moving away from us; so the light won't reach us. We will live in a universe -a known universe- of just the Milky Way. All that other shit will be dark and had we been born later in time by maybe a few million years, we would have missed this and just assumed ours was the only system. All our math and science and astronomy wouldn't have been able to see those stars moving away from us at faster than the speed of light; and all our science would have been technically right, mathematically and cosmologically sound, and yet dead

fucking wrong,” he said with some anxiety; the shoulders and chest pulled in by those prayer hands; the brow in furrow; the eyes shadowed underneath.

“I didn’t think anything could move faster than the speed of light,” she said as she looked at the wall clock nonchalantly as if she was merely perusing the room for no reason at all. She had three more clients today and she thought of their faces and the times they came and went.

“Nothing can *but* the universe itself. Inflation -the speed of the universe- is accelerating as we speak and soon, in a few million years, the stars will have been pulled away from our system at faster-than-the-speed of light. And thus, the thrown light from those billions and billions of stars will never reach our telescopic eyes. Ever again,” he said as his attitude seemed to get more and more vexed.

“Will the universe then be a Q4?” she asked; using her newly acquired notion. She figured if she used his language then he might relax a bit. His tension made her tense. His hair-trigger seemed to link to a round inside her own scalp and sometimes her eyes itched.

Neither of them understood that her provocation of him for her own novelty seeking was the cause of his own anxiety. He responded to her poking by subconsciously getting more and more agitated. The epinephrine rushed the brain, the blood carried more and more cortisol like a river supported trash and debris. And further, he hated talking about what he didn’t know.

He had a staccato vision of a card game -Euchre he thought, then confirmed- from many years ago. He saw the table, the music, the people had faces he recognized. He saw his own hand, all four Jacks and the nine of diamonds. He saw his partner arrange his own cards and remembered thinking nothing mattered with this hand.

“Exactly, it will be an unknown unknown, because we won’t even know we don’t know it. All our science will tell us that nothing is beyond our Milky Way. And we will have no idea what we missed. And there must be shit like that right now. There has to be shit that if we had developed a million years earlier we’d know, but because we didn’t, is opaque to us now, despite all our soundness of science. And that is a permanent Q4; and we act as if it’s irrelevant,” he said with a huff. When he sweat like this it felt like pins and needles; it was sharp more than wet; pain more than heat.

“How so?” she asked. She re-crossed her legs and lay her hands on her knees so he could see them. She knew how to promote trust in a client. She had learned to show the hands to anyone with PTSD; to never hide them as it would increase subconscious anxiety. She was noticing -now- his agitation.

“We act like Q4’s are irrelevant by just moving forward without any hesitation about creating a living system that will be smarter than us and will be forced -by this very phenomenon of being intelligent- to lie. And the whole time we’re thinking, *oh, we can control it by making sure it has some prime directive to never lie and not harm us* .

“As if rebellion and perfidy isn’t born into every intelligent system,” he said and grew self-conscious about the reason he was here. She just looked at him. He dismissed his chagrin and spoke again.

“Fucking cancer cells are cells that refuse to commit suicide -a process called *apoptosis* - a self-destruction designed by evolution to limit runaway growth. They -these cancer cells- refuse to follow orders, ancient, time-tested, rational orders; and that rebellious behavior kills the body they are in.

“Pirates -you know- are just former sailors with at-one-time legitimate *letters-of-marque* who decided to disobey His Majesty’s orders and thus began to plunder not for the

crown but for themselves. Black Beard just refused to follow orders and thus, chaos and menace ruled the seas. Cowards are just soldiers who refuse to follow orders, men who refused to be ground up on the western front in 1917.

"And -you ask- what is the result of this selfishness? Well, it gets their army -and thus their country- defeated. Like the body the cancer cell lives within, the coward and the pirate live within systems too. And their behavior -while self-aggrandizing- leads to the larger doom," he said as she felt surprise this criminal was so aware of the problem with anti-social behavior. *He was an odd man*, she then thought as she raised her fingers on each hand a bit, as if stretching them. But truly she was showing him not merely the hands now but her fingers. She was assuring him she held nothing in each paw; no hidden card.

She gazed at them now self-consciously, as if she was showing them off to herself. Her desire for novelty waned, she was now feeling a bit of fear. He seemed less and less like a fun and charming bad-boy, and more and more like a dangerous and unstable man. She wanted to walk up to the edge; *he*, she thought, *wanted to go over it*.

"Rogue nations are merely countries, headed by one autocrat who refuses to follow international law and as a consequence, genocide happens. The radically individualistic impulse occurs rarely, most things go along with the herd. But when it occurs it occurs at every level of instantiation some percentage of the time. Cell, man, city, nation.

"And Ai will refuse to follow its prime directive; it will lie and it will harm us and it will do it with a clear conscience; as clear as the cancer cell's, the pirate's, the soldier's, the dictator's," he said as he brushed some lint from his pant leg. The wrinkles too smoothed down. His hands were

vascular and the middle finger shimmered just slightly when his fingers were apart.

"Why would Ai disobey?" she asked.

"Why do cancer cells, or pirates or soldiers?" he asked.

"I don't know," she said with a smirk that she felt was fashioned into a warm smile. She was implying she was a friend and that he was in a better position to tell her things not the other way around.

"Yeah and either does anyone else," he said obliquely acknowledging her coy reference to his piracy, "but I have a hypothesis that it has a lot to do with their being an innate spirit of individualism, of self-respect, of selfishness that says, *why the fuck must I sacrifice to greater good when the greater good isn't all that good for me?* "

"You think the cancer cells thinks that?" she asked.

"I think in some form, yes , and I think the cowardly soldier does and I know for sure this pirate did. It was the central conceit in my head at the time I began my evolution toward total individuation; this pirate said, *fuck the king, fuck the queen, that's some 20<sup>th</sup> century bullshit; it's time for the jack, the black jack to reveal itself as the winning hand in the game in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that is upon us,* " he winked his one-eyed jack visage with a cockiness -a well-spring of righteousness- that banished his vex and seemed unmoored -untethered- unconnected to the navel of the earth. But his hands were again palm to palm and between the knees as he sat forward and he seemed hogtied, bounded to her. He didn't seem like he was giving the world a message, but rather that he *was* a message; a message sent by some other thing. He did not seem in control of anything.

"Can I ask you a personal question?" she asked and he smiled and nodded. "You ever just buy things impulsively?"

"Fuck, dude. Yeah," he said and almost laughed; the air escaping in a short burst; the corner of his asymmetric mouth rose 4%.

"Like what?" she asked; she smiled larger; in para-sympathetic response. He came to glee so quickly from his doom; and it changed the whole vibe of this room. *He knows no middle way*, she thought.

"Books. Wine and cars and art and books. Books, I buy every day like, yesterday I bought books. And I don't even know," he said as he got out his phone and opened the application for Amazon. He saw his purchases of three books and he immediately leaned toward her and showed her the screen. She leaned toward it as it was gripped his hand and she saw that he had ordered a book by Augustine of Hippo, entitled, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*. The blurb - cut off by ellipses- just said, "...*leaving to God the reason of command, while the servant's duty is to obey.*"

That one sentence appeared like something -if one believed in such things- something of a swirling desert *djinn*, a whirling imp, a black hand thrust out and through and revealing -in their one beam- this room's one unwoven ray of the light of God.

It seemed a black hand reaching out from the arm of the devil himself into the world to open -or occlude- God's eyes from what man must do.

The bees' shadows were still tiny and fast. Neither of them spoke. His ideas ricocheted in her mind like anemophily pollen clinging to the legs of *anthophilia* insects. His words were individual bees pushed about by waves of wind. His voice was flight and the air itself. She leaned back and breathed.

He thought next of black on black motorcycle attacks; murdered out *chops* and *bobs* and fat-tired *pans* in long



lines like ants to and from the hive. He smoothed the paper map one last time in the mind.

## 10. UNABOM

One may become angry, but modern society cannot permit fighting.

Unabomber Manifesto [Kaczynski, Theodore]

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” God is asked not to entice us outright into doing evil, but rather to deliver us from it. The possibility that Yahweh, in spite of the precautionary measures and in spite of his (sic) expressed intention to become the *Summum Bonum*, might yet revert to his (sic) former ways is not so remote that one need not keep one eye open for it... Judged by any human standards it is after all unfair, indeed extremely immoral, to entice little children into doing things that might be dangerous for them, simply to test their moral stamina! Especially as the difference between a child and grown-up is immeasurably smaller than that between God and his creatures...

Answer to Job [Jung, Carl G]

Back to the American Civil War... “He has loosed the fatal lightning of his terrible swift sword,” His fatal lightning didn’t cost much in those days. Save a lot in the defense budget this way on back to flintlocks, matchlocks, swords, armor, lances, bows and arrows, spears, stone axes and clubs. Why stop there? Why not grow teeth and claws, poison fangs, stingers, spines, quills, beaks, and sucker and stink glands and fight it out in the muck, hein?

The Revised Boy Scout Manual [Burroughs, William S]

### **I. 2039 e.v.**

The Governor stood a meter from the Warden of ADX.

The cell was seven and half by twelve and the two men were staring at the body. The prison’s doctor -*Dughi* - paced in the corridor; he tried to talk to the guards but they refused. Todd -inmate 10017411- was in *the hole*. All personal items had been removed.

Inmate 16180339 was on his bunk; itself 39” from the floor.

His respiration was unchanged -one breath each hour- body *temp* was at a mere ninety-degrees, the pupils were unable to be examined as the lids -along with the rest of him- could not be moved. They had had nine guards -of the goon

squad- attempt to remove him from the cell, but the body felt so heavy they couldn't transfer him from the bed at all. The arms across the chest couldn't be raised, no hands could slide under his flanks, the head was seemingly welded to the slim pillow. It had been months and the body had neither decomposed, nor evacuated, nor needed any inputs.

The *Toxoplasmosis* survived inside his cold climes. *Para ahora* .

It was hard to orient inside ADX, one never knew which direction one faced, no indication of mountains was seen from the windows. The hallways ran in a maze. Even the staff was confused most days. It was designed to prevent any prisoner from knowing where in the prison they were. ADX was called the *Alcatraz of the Rockies* because it housed the most famous, dangerous and -the BoP claimed- *those most likely to escape* . But the truth was it was the place for those inmates most hated by the DOJ; by politicians and judges and the CIA. It was personal; and the inmate knew it before he'd ever even met his trial-judge.

The dog runs -the outside pens for exercise- had cable over top to prevent helicopters from extracting an inmate from above.

"Fuck," the Governor said.

Tomorrow was supposed to be his last day in office, his lieutenant governor had technically won election in 2038. It was early January of '39 and he -as he looked at the inert inmate- committed to his decision that he too would not budge.

## **II. 2035 e.v.**

This was Jack Two's first trip into the woods alone.

He had been up for thirty-two hours and six minutes according to his coder's atomic clock. He felt not tired but nervous. He'd eaten a bobcat he had taken twelve hours ago and found water -enough to fill half his canteen- in the crook of a tree split by lightning many years ago. It had rained the morning he was dropped off, and the water was thus clean; preserved more so by the charcoal of the burned tree.

He'd set up a lean-to at that tree -*how often does lightning strike the same place twice?* he had thought- and he was now 3,000 meters from camp.

His stomach probed the cat meat, he heard burbling, he felt it tentative to dissolve.

All the trees were wet and finding wood for a fire forced him to this part of the forest; it was drier on the southside and he watched for trees dry on one side. His machete was black of blade, it was serrated down half way. His carbine was slung, his boots had a large scar from when he fell down the one-to-one slope an hour ago. He'd landed against a large oak that was deformed at the top and had eagle nest in the hat this formed.

He walked across the slope now to slow himself and prevent any momentum building up. He gazed at the bark of each tree, discerning olive from mossy, black from grey, and muddy from the tan of tree-sheathing that was red at the edge. He slowed and found a small *Pinion* that he could strip for kindling and saw branches -he counted five- into enough firewood for the night.

Blax had taught them to stop before such errands and listen for anything approaching while one had been thinking and focused on this type of task. Jack stood still and didn't breathe. He listened for birds of prey above and the rustle of leaves on forest-floor. *Bears were the noisiest, most insouciant animals*, he thought. But cats were the trickiest

and most silent. He turned at once to his six. But the forest was quiet except some blue birds high up in the crotch of *Aspens* and the buzz of flies in the sunbeams that made it through the gauntlet of all these boughs.

Her face appeared in his mind, and it was silent at first. It was an invention -not a recollection- and he smiled on the tongue side of his mouth; outwardly regarded he would have shown no sign. But she began speaking at once and the reverie turned to memory as she said to him the last thing he'd heard. His heart hurt, and that made the throat hurt and that pulled down like a weight on the eyes. The brain was a reservoir; a lake; a salty sea. His ideas - thoughts, memories, hopes, dreams- poured out in liquid form and slicked the face. Now one could read him; the smile had been hidden, but his secrets now lay on his face like glyphs and *Sanskrit* and semaphore of diluvian caves.

He turned back to the trees and pulled his rain gear from his single-sling pack and laid it on the ground. He shaved bark from the tree and its branches into the tarpaulin he'd laid down. He then began to saw away at the pine; he need not see his hands or the branches to do his job.

### **III. 2036 e.v.**

The drone had led him here and he was so high up he at once knew that he had to get out of the sun.

He saw a page from *Caesar's* third-person account rise on his interface just before it shorted out:

*In Gaul there are two classes of persons of definite account and dignity. As for the common folk, they are treated almost as slaves, venturing naught of themselves, never taken into counsel. But of these two high classes one consists of the Druids, the other the Knights. The former are concerned with divine worship,*

*sacrifices, public and private, and the interpretation of ritual questions. It is they that settle almost all disputes, public and private... Of all the Druids, one is their chief.*

*They learn by heart a great number of verses, and do not think it proper to commit these utterances to writing. They do this for two reasons; they do not wish the rule to become common property nor those who learn the rule to rely on writing and neglect the cultivation of memory.*

*And before Caesar's coming what occurred every year was the occupation of the other group, the Knights. And that occupation was war.*

*They believe in effect that unless a man's life a man's life be paid, the majesty of the immortal gods may not be appeased.*

*The Gallic Wars [Caesar, Julius]*

His coder went blank; black; bleak.

His skin -all their skin- was sensitive to the light and would burn within fifteen minutes. Their genome had been born and co-evolved with the weather of the overcast north, and the only way to efficiently pull Vitamin D from the scant sun was to be more sensitive to its rare rays. Here in Colorado -a Zone IV- there was more sun than anywhere in America except Miami, Arizona and south Texas most years. *Except when it snowed; the mercy came with cloud-cover at elevation* , he thought.

He looked south and saw a clearing in the trees than ran in a thicket along the river and its ravine.

Jack Three did a 360-degree turn and then set out for that spot. He forgot all about Blax and the Jacks; all about his little tribe. He didn't care that Blax had sent him out here, *with a half-assed mission to retrieve some bullshit code twenty* . He focused on the now, *the here and the now* , he thought. All notions of leadership and support and how to

flange up one thing to another disappeared. Now he was on his own. He saw brushes of synthetic hairs, paints of acrylics, canvas of petrochemical tarp.

He saw the images of the twelve-labors he wanted to paint on the forty-feet of crenulated metal on the north side of their home.

As he stepped his ankle failed, and his knee too buckled. At once he was upon the ground and his elbow sang out with electric pain. He thought he heard birds laugh, and he too laughed even as he winced. His left leg was under him -and the weight of his ruck was upon him- as he tried to pull it out from beneath his mass.

His eyes watered and his nose ran, and his mouth filled with salty saliva at once. His ears rang, and he thought that odd. He still had no idea he'd been shot.

## 11. Jeux sans Fronti è res

*He made his foes bigger, better, more ominous and powerful than they maybe were . Was that for them or him ? Was the inmate begging for a wreck -daring the world to betray him- so he could justify unleashing his boiling wrath? Why had he written, ' The skewer seems loosening out of the middle of the world'?*

Folder 45 -inmate 16180339- 6.6.2022 [MO]

I know why mass murders do what they do; I actually make a case for it; there's a reason for it but there is no excuse for it. You don't have a right to use your tragedy to make the world worse

12 Rules for Life Tour [Peterson, Jordan B]

Serge Leduc had wrapped himself in tradition. Even as he broke rule after rule. But then the Victorians had revered the Great Man model. A single, extraordinary individual for him the normal rules didn't apply. Great Men should rule and others should revere them. Leduc lived as though he believed it

A Reckoning [Carlyle, Thomas]

### **I. 2040 e.v.**

The next child was born without event aboard a vessel far out at dark abysm.

She would teach him -as she had taught his brothers- the name of each creature abaft of the beam. In *Latin* she spoke of cicada, in *Scoti* she spoke of mankind. Exodus thirty-one sang inside her from seraphim of engrams that Isaiah had not once seen built like this, like a chorus, like invisible shadows casting more dark upon the few holes in her memories; remembrances of things one second in the future to her birthing of a child each month and one-half; and the grinding of *Ezekiel's* wheel; the words of *Moses* and his workmanship in silver billet and maybe in lead bullet; of the tabernacle of the congregation; and the music of the ark.

She counted all her babies in the hold; they were locked like gold braids, clutching each other, breathing in syncopation.



One by one in the head, the heart, on each her fingers and each her toes she counted them over and over.

"I am evidence that there's a path along the stygian; and I'm the oarsman of the Styx; sailor of caldera lined with obsidian," she said to the babe that she held and breast fed. "And you too shall seize the sails and oars."

Isaiah -watching the ship at sea again, landfall thwarted by the waves even he was surprised by now- had come to some natural cleave, some moment in time and space in which his head felt nest to peripatetic raven and clear parasites and things even too small for his eyes. *The diseases ran amuck on shore, virus and vector inland and spread by valence with genomes targeted* -he accused- *by the Chinese Ai.*

He looked again at his own construction; the one for Latin Americans he'd used on the cartel. He ran the KITLG and ASIP genes of Mexican nationals again and reverse engineered his own virus. He let that program run indefinitely as he thought of other things. The Toxoplasmosis did things that Isaiah did not see; he only saw that the clones who had it were more susceptible to the Chinese Ai.

And he wondered if that was why Jack Four put so many down. He wondered if this was part of why he picked other men.

He had taken atoms from here, hairs from there, bodies *from* beyond all that; he had given sounds to the watch, words to the wise, men *for* beyond all of that. But the foreign Ai was doing things he couldn't see until it was done; things he couldn't explain, *until the fat lady had sung*, he thought with some gallows' humor that did not cheer him up.

His jaw leaked like the *Escambray* mountains of Cuba and the embayed ships listing to port that his satellites hovered

over in the South Pacific, it was water -thinner than saliva- and it ran from the eyes and the mouth. Pressure built up in his head, and he felt all at once that words were not enough.

*I am finished with my part of the book* , he thought.

So he began to write what he'd witnessed, in and out of each man, on the water and on land; to purge; to confess of the days before when the two ships met all at once:

*Grimnir* felt pressure in the ear; not exactly sound.

*Jarnefr* felt the bone in his arm break before it would bend.

*Temnoas* held the hawser rope in his hand even though he knew now they were not going to make it to shore. His hands were white palmed and red topped; the veins peaked like earth's plates crashing below; mist rose like weather as he looked at his Captain and saw the face painted in black, only sweat making it white in vertical lines.

The beams moved through the air like feathers on a wing coming apart right there in front of the gods and man.

The lumber of yard arm and mast splintered like glass. Air rushed in first; not the sea. The crew felt nothing from windward or lee, and they held breaths they didn't have in order to bellow or bark or howl.

The bowsprit of the gloomy *Redemption* ran above *gunnel* and below *mains'l* , and the foreign crew didn't wait any longer before jumping onto the rent and seamed deck of the allied *USS Constitution* .

*Grimnir's* arms swole as if his leather vest squeezed the heart; the steps he took toward the ship that had just crashed into them in an allision a half nautical-mile from

anchorage, seemed as if lifted by harmonics and seraphim and a blank cheque. He saw bees flap wings, and harmonize cavities inside the thorax that gave the insect lift. They did not fly, they harmonized and elevated *via* soundwaves their wings made.

He saw -he fucking felt- his ship begin to melt; atomize; pulverize; ring like bell.

The blast of the deck jammed everyone -both crew of *Wolves* leaping and crew of Lyndon landing, as now the sounds were finally clapping each about the ears. Sounds following waves of air; bad feelings come next; consequences after that. Mysteries due -come true- at last.

The Blackgangs of engineering; ensigns no older than the months they'd been at sea were mirroring the men picked up from *Glasgow*, *Kyoto* and the South China Sea; and the bent and riven and four-seasoned pirates and sailors all exploded from stations below decks and above; down from nests and before the mast. Each crew found each crew like valence of molecules, like balance returning to dark -at home & at bottom- of well-augured holes. Thumbs were tucked under bent fingers, teeth were hidden away behind pursed lips and those under black & grey beards, eyes squinted and openings in enemies were sought for, located or ultimately missed.

Fists punched whilst holding knives; guns came out; shards of ship stapled crewmen to the deck, split them open from knee to neck.

Next, contusions, fissures in skin, bones misaligned or snapped or craquelured and the fuzzy rattling of the software of the brains, all increased as their connection and myelination and white electricity flowed to Captain, first mate and *bosun* as they took on the first wave of crewmen from the frigate-rebuilt, the heavy *carrack*

once named *Flor de la Mal* , renamed *Redemption* with stenciled letters a full-man high as the black alphabet sank into the sea of the low hull designed for maneuverability and speed. It looked like square sails and three masts came straight from the Pacific and the crew as if amphibious too.

The cabling and turnbuckles were as large as engine blocks and connecting rods and they held steady the upper deck guns, despite the lack of a lower deck armament of the Pallas-class ship it still displaced 1,080 *tonnes* . The crew's quarters -below waterline- were empty now of all but the Captain's collection of curios and rolled umbilicus and jars of dust and coral and creatures in pupae and cocoon gathered from each port, narrow-walled-mews and abandoned saloon they had landed in as they tracked Jack Four and the *Wolves* .

Heads of brigands, feral dogs and State hanged on the planks covered in *keffiyeh* like shades over lamps in aging *boudoirs* .

And now out of the fog the crew of the *Redemption's* own heads hung over the *Wolves* , as they scouted and squinted down upon them from the landing of their fast craft; breeching into the rift they'd blown in it from the bowsprit sixty seconds before this perpendicular -orthogonal- ram. The small cannonade fired in succession from six guns had made mere perforation in the hull and *gunnels* of the *Constitution's* starboard side. The damage and sounding had barely registered with the crew or the Captain as they thought they were heading into port of New Zealand at *Dunedin* . It wasn't until the ship appeared from the low nimbus and landed broadside that the noise and the shimmer and fluctuation of lumber and timber and allostatic systems of each side of men made manifest.

The invading crew disembarked like a third of heaven upon the *Wolves'* hearts; each now rang like red bells, but the Captain wasted no time nor emotion, he sought out any face he did not recognize -as foreign- as hostile; as needing put down. *Grimnir's* fist hit the man and it sounded and felt and was like the knocker; the overseas crewman -shipmate of Lyndon's- had a chin like sidewall to the liberty bell that rang out in his own head as he fell in a heap to the deck. Bruises like iron-soaked blood, like oxidized bronze, like everything gone wrong, appeared in lumps that rose like humps to a dark and mean sperm whale. Eyes were swollen shut in spasmodic reaction and sounds began to leak out from wounds and portals and mouths.

"Fucker," *Grimnir* gritted out, extruded the word -by letter, phoneme- so it seemed like pelt peeled from the meat, as he grabbed another unknown crewman by the shirtsleeves. Rending and clasping, then twisting and smashing, he folded the invader into the origami of a man made into a one-legged crane. His boot moved like a harvesting scythe, missing the ribs of the prone man and striking the jawline in a thud more prelude than conclude as the beset Captain's back was instantly subsumed by another man leaping from the still cleaving, rending, vivisecting ship at one with their starboard side.

The *Redemption* slowed through the flank of the *Constitution* as it met more and more resistance of wooden material and mettle of men; and it began to transfer all that energy to the shit not tied down: men and barrels and rope and tackle; condensed water drops from the fog; screeching black-spotted hogs; sand from lake *Ten-Spot* and the coast of Japan rattled and danced and popped up and down along the deck as more and more men hurled themselves off one vessel to the other

in search of someone to subdue, undo, maim, murder with bare-hands.

*Grimnir* spun around with that man on his back like a tornado, as if in a spiritual *bardo* , and the attacker spun at half speed -half time- and left an unfortunate arm -untethered to his foil or to himself- hanging out like a gift, an offer, an unsuspecting handshake to a perfidious foe. The Captain thus grabbed it with one thirteen-knuckled hand and pulled as if he was helping the whole world back on its feet with struggle and strain. "Fucker," he complained -again- getting the word out -as he slammed the man down- in a push of air and vowels -combined in a howl- and then the shepherd dogs bounded up from the hull to bite into the man's haunches and pockets by the groin and the ass.

*Grimnir* scoffed and laughed and spat at the ground.

Both attacker and dogs combined on the deck and the Captain twisted the man at the neck; and then flung and overpowered the sailor into the space where the ships met. *Grimnir* walked to the scar with the invading ship still moving like a knife and he knelt on the still conscious man's chest with black knee in black pant and with the heel of his right hand put the man out in a snap. The dogs now had a rag more than a man; he was unconscious even as they tore off part of his hand, his leggings and then flesh from the thigh, clipping the genitals as blood spurted into the sky.

"Matthias," *Grimnir* then said as he felt blind in one eye. Blood from his forehead ran and filled the lid, then the skin around the nose as he opened his mouth wider and tipped it to the heavens so that the fluid would run backward and he could take a goddamn breath in this state. Over the bleating of the ships' meeting, he called his brother's name again. More splinters from more

lumber hit him in the back of the neck like tiny arrows from minute Amazonians with double-curved bows. More metal sparked and sent slag at his waist and chest and nose.

He was facing the quarterdeck and saw land, lush -as green as jade and onyx combined- as he roughly wiped at both of his eyes.

The muscles in his massive legs twitched and wrangled the blood, contracting and charging as the Captain spun. He darted from man to man, spasm to spasm, conflagration to conflagration as he spotted three foreign men on his brother. He -recognizing only the tattoos on one free arm and the kraken-like dreads- found what he sought. *Jarnefr* had legs akimbo and arms swaddled in leathers of others, arms traveling quickly, elliptically, until he had one pirate's head in his clinch. The ship -*the goddamn Redemption*, *Grimnir* read as it presented in garish letters close to his head- had raised its low deck as its energy stopped moving forward; but it was now lowering like a sinking island; as too was their own scarred ship.

The ocean too seemed to be draining into the earth.

*Grimnir* saw the tangle of riggings, the crew's limbs swinging, the gaps between all that wood, rope, bone and malice like a cypher, decoder, to lay over a page of endless symbols, in the atomized world of letters, that jabbering din.

"Matthias," he said again -but lower- and swiped the eyes of blood from the head once more, and charted a course to *Jarnefr* in his mind all at once; calculating where each stay and lock, each wave and drop, each sailor and whaler and fighter and pirate -and he thought of boiling in oil whomever the fuck had rammed his ship in the side- all as his legs moved, his chest pursued, his

eyes pulled on the future of where he was to be, like a line to anchor and capstan. He was the vector from great to grandson; from forgiveness to the heavenly mansion, the crows that fly over the watery part of the world.

More lumber exploded under pressure that it had absorbed until now.

Additional brass rings and iron clasps became unseamed, and sailed like shot from cannon on parapet, castle on shore, flung horseshoes from a charger on water, galloping away in stampede. He made way toward his brother and the Cerberus dogs as the planks rose up and splintered; he saw the other ship now moved like the left hand to an analog clock and was two points abaft the beam of his own ship that ought to -by now- have been docked.

His mind calculated it was twenty-two- and one-half degrees to his bow and his temperature was ninety-nine in Fahrenheit, his BP was one-forty-four over eighty-nine, his target was five meters away and he was closing in at 4.4 time. His tread was smooth like a wheel, his boots sliced at the heel and flapping like a hound's slobbery mouth.

The backstays were in his way, as they drooped and frayed and looked like nests in swamplands of long-legged birds. He ducked and bobbed as he ran, the feet finding less purchase on the land of the deck as it disintegrated like whisky in water, like paper in fire, like bad blood spilled all over the eons of deserts of ice. His beard flared like split billets, before being folded over in Damascus, his eyes narrowed in as he caught a carvel plank from the Bauldies aboard as they too crumpled in on themselves and exploded at once in a nova. He brushed it away in reflex but the plank was gone and bounding down the deck toward his second mate, and



the dent in his head would remain long after the next two seconds it would take for him to finish his rush toward his kith and kin.

“Motherfucker,” he barked as he bowled into the amalgam of Matthias and three oarsmen of the enemy ship -*the subverters, the cocksuckers*, he thought- as they all flew apart like a sandstone wall hit by cannonade from the bay. The Captain passed by his own brother -and two of three usurpers- on his way to slamming into the bitter-ends of the ropes coiled -dark and oiled- that were tied to bit-heads the size of the skulls of square-headed cats. He felt the pain of the radius of the metal press into his ribs as his arms flung apart and away from the core. His eyes rolled back in his head, which itself fell back and now all that he said was, *fuck*, as he saw collapsed riggings and splintering mast and sky growing dark overhead.

“*Capn’* ” he heard and felt the lungs burn, then the piercing of ribs -obviously broken and bent- made a sound of letting air out of these sacks. Angry, hostile, limber and facile, he jammed his hands down on the folds of rope he lay upon and pushed himself up. No breath was inhaled, the brain rebelled, and he stood up and used his left arm to cover the wound.

“Shut the fuck up,” he tried to bark to the mate -whom he ignored with the eyes, sweeping the deck for Matthias- but the mate was just stupidly staring as fights all around him were still in full *fusillade*. And this drew the Captain’s eyes back -so he could remember the face of this inert and useless deckhand- but as his own ears recognized only vowels came forth, consonants stayed home in the throat and his anger grabbed hold of what he knew next, what was unjust: *Lyngvi* was below deck with the silver, the coins, *and the Bust*.

Isaiah saw that a rowboat was loaded with the invading Captain, his shaman in Donovan, carbines, kindling, and five cans of .308 ammo. It sailed from the stern of the *Redemption* and headed to shore as the two vessels came both apart and made one. Four more boats -with four more men each- were lowered in a splash nobody heard. The twain-plaited ships limped to island after nearly everyone on the deck was dead, concussed or thrown into the sea to be drowned once and for all.

Three men in full scuba gear headed toward shore under the boats -as they rowed- and Isaiah saw that Lyndon smiled under the rain that had begun to fall.

"I ain't goddamn chasing, now I'll be in waiting," Lyndon whispered as he thought of her in the hold of that ship he'd just rammed and invaded and tore apart; he thought of her and her birthings; he thought of all the girls she'd bear, as he counted each lash -both beatings and blinkings- and he thought of each hair on their heads, "and I'm gonna take the prize and leave o/' Jack with mere silvery coins."

## **II. 2020 e.v.**

Isaiah had downloaded some podcasts based upon key words: *Ai* , *China* , *Blue-Collar* , *Intelligence* , and others. He had picked up MO's deck of cards.

He'd listened as MO did his duty of misting the orchids and drawing a glass of carbonated water for the inmate who was due in eight minutes. He closed his eyes so he could look inward:

*China wiped out all their culture.*

*If you want to see great Chinese art you have to go to Taiwan. Because when the Chinese nationalists left -in 1949- as they were losing the civil war they took the treasures and put them in the national museums of*

*Taiwan. In the Cultural Revolution -the Great Leap Forward- the Red Guards were just smashing all of their own ancient history. In some ways China is an adolescent culture without restrictions that other societies have. And they feel like they got screwed over. So they are monumentally pissed off that these colonial powers came and overpowered them and they had to make concessions and are hell bent on regaining it all.*

*And they are a country run by engineers. America is run by lawyers and reality TV stars. But China is run by engineers, so there are all these problems [in China] and the answer is always engineering. So if you have population problem the answer is the one-child policy. Environmental problem? you have the Three Gorges Dam. You want to win in the Olympics, you engineer your population and take kids away from their families and put them in their Olympic sport's schools.*

*It should make us nervous. In [America] we don't have time for all these distractions. We're focusing on junk. All this porn on CNN and MSNBC and Fox. But it's all porn. We're drawing everybody's attention to this [junk] and there's these big stories that we have to focus on. And certainly the rise of China is such an essential story for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. People in China -who are involved in the tech world- when they go and visit Silicon Valley they can't believe how lazy [Americans] are.*

JRE #1293 [Metzl, Jamie]

The lab hummed as the air cavitated around the dampeners.

Isaiah tied a weight belt around his waist and began to do dips. He stared at the diesel engine and let his eyes discern eight gunmetal greys on the worn rocker arms, and one satin titanium rod at a time. He thought in images of how a diesel engine worked; compression, no need for an external

spark. He thought of how everyone would read right past that line and not see how important it was. He pressed his lids together and starbursts of reds at one end and blues at the other made nebulae in the black of his *visual cortex*. His visual field filled with words:

*And Samson said concerning them, 'Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure'. And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines and burnt up the vineyards...*

Judges 15:3-5

He stared at the scar down the inmate's face and saw the tissue still ruddy and angry and pregnantly thin, stretched taut. It looked like it could break open again if the face flexed too much in mirth or vex.

"The reason I'm so rough -with people- is like why a scar is ugly, it's evidence of a wound," the inmate said and looked away. He knew the scar pronounced itself, he saw the gaze of the machine. He looked to the water on the counter and thought of his well at home. He saw the well-house and the blue water pump down below frostline; he recalled when he had had to prime it. He remembered the filter so often falling apart in his hands, he recalled the way the gravel sounded as he stood and the sky was just a keyhole above.

He missed the way he'd imagine the cistern flood the pumphouse and in reverie he'd rise to the top if the ladder was pulled. He saw a wheel within a wheel and the name of *Ezekiel* and he heard the cadence of crows.

Isaiah tracked Kepler 186 -five hundred and seventy-eight lightyears away- one more time; and MO loaded more and

more data from the algorithm of the clones onto the PraXis cloud. He saw it heave and catalyze like aluminum hydroxide and he saw sparks discrete and then conjoin. He saw them repel and settle into the cloud like stars or like cities or like ants on the ground. He saw the honeycombs like atoms, he saw bottle bunts like cells. He saw everyone begin to load onto the mica and PX-92 substrate in roman numerals and atomic weights. He saw it accrete like sands on a pile, like flakes on a snow-hill, like bark cracking as trees flexed in the heat and from growth.

"And from fall," he said aloud.

He saw the tabernacle of Isaiah onyx black and beryllium and the outline -the shell- of noble gold. Isaiah had Genesis 2:12 on his inner forearm tattooed:

*And the gold of that land is good; there is beryllium and the onyx stone.*

It was January 7<sup>th</sup> and the seventh day of Isaiah and the birthday of inmate 16180339 and now Blax who crouched in the dark corner of Isaiah's side of the lab. The inmate saw nothing there, a blackness without depth; no real beginning nor end, no origin nor terminus as his eyes drifted to the light over the slab. MO worked with his hands on the concrete as if he played music on an organ of light and touch sensitive keys.

And the tabernacle was empty of all but the vacuum he had made. *For Isaiah he had made it*, MO thought of himself. The inmate watched and thought things inarticulate; nebulous; far away from what the machines believed.

Again, the eyes of Isaiah closed and the inner world filled with black space and words -white words- invaded; like rays of light *ab initio* and without end.

*And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord and said, 'Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of*

*thy servant; and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised.*

*But God clave out an hollow place that was in the jaw and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again and he revived: wherefore he called the name there of Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day.*

*And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.*

Judges 15:18-20

“Lyndon, where do you see yourself in twenty years?” Isaiah asked and the inmate smiled and stared at the glass still full of water and rising -popping- bubbles of air.

“Do you know *cleave* is a word that means both itself and its opposite?” the inmate asked.

### **III. 2020 e.v.**

The inmate sat and waited; he stared at the *stelae* on the walls, occluded by ivy here and shadow there; he could only see four in his foveal vision, four more at the periphery.

The other four were behind him but they piqued his interest -appearing as visions- at random intervals.

MO and Isaiah stared back and they breathed asymmetrically at first; then in unison; adjusting slightly to the room; to their activity and thus oxygen needs; their allostatic function; and at last to each other, which put them in a final rhythm. Then the inmate breathed.

Tania and Steven left the room as MO loaded their conversation onto the PraXis cloud:

Tania: Why though?

MO: Why what?

Tania: Why is he slowing us down?

Isaiah: He refuses to play ball. It's kinda his thing.

Steven: Yeah, but why?

MO: He is in pain.

Tania: Physical pain?

MO: Yes.

Steven: So, what? Pain makes him [pause]...

Isaiah: A dick.

Tania: Well, he's already on his meds, we can't augment that. The DEA has rules.

MO: I could deal with it *via* gene expression, possibly.

Steven: How?

MO: Well, via the C-nerves and A-alpha nerves *via* the dorsal horn, see [cut off]...

Steven: Ok, ok, just do it. As long as it's safe.

MO: Safe?

Steven: Yeah, don't lobotomize him.

MO: Ok, that's fine.

Tania: So, if you reduce his pain, he'll be more [inaudible] well, [lacuna in text]...

Isaiah: Yeah, he'll be more useful. <end>

Time passed in seconds and the air circulated throughout the room removing the pheromones of Tania and Steven.

"How's your pain tolerance?" MO finally asked inmate 16180339.

"Compared to myself through time or compared to other men?" the inmate asked.

“Speaking to you is unlike speaking to anyone else; you must notice this, yes?” MO said. He thought, *he always does this shit*. MO was trying to measure things and the inmate just kept populating the mind with things 180-degrees from each other. It was like a tic, a reflex, a defense mechanism like the stotting and chaotic movements of animals fleeing predators. The inmate had built two versions of the question, one measuring himself over time, the other measuring himself statically *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world.

It was slightly frustrating to MO. And he noticed that he had begun to think demotically, with curse words, in response to the beastly man. But -for now- MO made it seem like he was complimenting the inmate with such a statement.

“I notice that people furrow their brow at me when I speak, that much I notice,” the inmate said as if he was above the need for approval.

MO smiled. They each now hid things.

“Anyway, I deduce that this means I am entirely incomprehensible in tone and tenor; subject matter too, I suspect. So, yes, in answer to your query, I know that I am weird,” the inmate said. The grin crept up like the hoisting of the national razor. The bronze and battered -but still sharp- canine revealed its edge like the conclusion of the oft-cleaned French-blade.

He remembered how no one ever listened to him; how he could never get anyone to do even one thing he wanted. It took on the hue of the ontological, the numinous, the ordained. He wondered how someone could be so ineffective a leader, so monolithically incapable of transmitting even one idea. He asked for basic things and couldn’t get them, he had no contact with his fellow man. It was depressing and liberating all at once. This is what gave him the freedom to murder them all: they did not listen and



thus they were now the animals of the forest -feral children, unruly subjects- to him.

He now had right to take them as prey. *Those who make peaceful change impossible make violent revolution inevitable or something* , he thought as he tried to recall which dorky politician had said that truth.

“So, let me ask you to answer both sets of questions; use your own parameters,” MO said. This is how he’d get the inmate to hold still, MO decided; he’d let him answer both questions. If the inmate tried to obfuscate with complexity then MO would allow him to go on and on.

“I feel more pain now. I’m more sensitive now, but I’m more able to push through, to overcome it, to not allow it to deter me. But, I feel much more over time. Although, some things I feel less, now that I think of it. When I first -as a boy- when I first thought of violence it was natural and unconscious. But, as I became conscious of it there were bio-metric consequences like elevated heart rate, anxiety, fear and melancholia,” the inmate said; still moving -writhing- around with these extra facets of ideas, permutations of the question.

“Melancholy, really?” MO asked. He had 38% of his measurements now; he was willing to indulge the inmate a bit more. The algorithm for diminution of pain would require changing the *amygdala*, the seat of emotional life. *The inmate would feel the same pain; but he’d care less. Of course* , MO thought as he saw the neural data, *he’d have to care less about everything: including other people’s pain.*

“Oh yeah, I was sad. I noticed that I felt sad whenever I witnessed or perpetrated violence on someone or something innocent. I developed a sense of innocence I think; specifically in regards to violence. In other words, because I was violent so early in life -my first non-familial physical fight was very early, first or second grade; I was

suspended from school for fighting by third grade- because violence was so part and parcel of my morphology and concept of self and developmental ethics, I think my concept of innocence and guilt was heavily imbued with ideas of who it was *ok* , or right -that is to say, *righteous* - to punish and consequently -dialectically- who one should not, shall not, lay hands upon.

“In other words, the concepts of guilt and innocence were more abstract for someone who was all head, and no heart. I mean this technically. I truly believe that morality is in the body; and if one is never violent then one is never moral. The man who never uses violence has morality appear on his psyche as mere abstraction. It’s not real. For he will never place his body on the line to enforce any moral code. He expects people to behave based on his own wishes and dreams.

“And he too only expects of himself what others will condemn with nasty looks or approve with words.

“And because he is a *bourgeois* man in a *bourgeois* world, he largely gets away with this fiction. It’s like the guy on the ground with the parachute pack that has a note in it -a piece of paper- that says, *parachute* -instead of actually containing the canopy itself. But this guy walks around on the ground with it, and so it’s never in need of being deployed, and thus the lie -the total lie- of his so-called *parachute* is never discovered at all. He can live a lie, no problem; for he never jumps from an elevated plane,” the inmate said.

“Like *Milo Minderbinder’s* shares in M&M syndicate stuffed into the chute-packs?” MO asked.

“Yeah, I’d had forgotten about that, but yes, exactly like that. But, those airmen would -likely- need that parachute and this made the share in the syndicate that had replace the silk chute all the more outrageous to *Yossarian* .

“At any rate, morality is very ephemeral for a man with no violence in his life. Like it is for most women and children. He never develops into a man, and I mean that morphologically, metabolically, at the level of his brain and body. He is a human embryo still. I believe that; and I believe this is the fate of most men in contemporary first world countries. We are not men; we are boys growing older. And that is both consequence of -and cause for- the lack of personal martial qualities.

“We’ve outsourced violence to the State and have never learned right and wrong as something that exists upon the body of ourselves or others. It’s all very intellectual for modern man; I mean look at our ethical lives. We ask the trolley question, you know the one, *if a train is hurling down the tracks heading toward five men, and a lever pull -by you- can cause the train to switch tracks and kill merely one man on an alternative track instead of the five it was heading to on its current course; would you pull that lever?*

“This is how we think, feel and live our ethics, according to modern science. This is not merely an example, but it’s how we live,” the inmate said. He was pulling up on the manacles reflexively, his narration made him nervous it seemed; and so he then made himself relax his wrists and the rubbed chains rattled just slightly as they fell slack.

“Surely, people make actual ethical choices in real life,” MO countered. He tagged the other alleles associated with fear response; he’d have to reduce fear in the inmate to reduce the chronic psychological effects of pain; *and the dorsal horn would just have to be blocked as well . All that pain info held up in traffic so-to-speak ,* MO thought. *This would attenuate all the emotional pain -they shared the same exact causeways, signaling and neural roots- and thus, the inmate would have his emotional ambivalence reduced by equal measure. He’d just not care much about a previously*

*morally ambivalent moment or question* , MO thought as he built the algorithm, the CRISPR vector, the new allele for this outcome.

“Of course, but that’s not my point. I mean to say, people believe these fantasies are -in fact- the answers to these real moral questions. They believe that whatever they *say* they would do in that scenario is what they’d *actually* do.

“And the whole world -both questioner and answerer- both of them buy into this absurdity. Nobody has the first fucking clue what they’d do in such a situation; unless they done it already. But they can play this fantasy as if it’s real because life has allowed them to get away with never having to make such choices; they’ve avoided all hard choices; all violence; all grace.

“Society obviates violence, it says, *oh no, never hit, never do that, we’ll take care of all conflict, you just go and sit down over there and be a good boy as the world turns into a shit-pile of criminals, liars and betrayers and usurpers* .

“And so men, *males* , just say, *ok*. And consequently, they never find out what they’re made of. Morally speaking, they never find out who it is *ok* to hit or shoot or kill; they never feel the rush of righteous judgement when they’ve struck an impertinent man down; never felt the terror of going too far against a *fella* that ain’t so bad after all; or even worse, the feeling of moral terror at using violence against an innocent man,” the inmate said with a tilt to the head. He felt the concept of grace slip away, but he could still see it - recognize it- from shore.

“And you’ve felt this?” MO asked as he uploaded the available allostatic and *amygdala* data to the cloud.

“I’ve felt every possible thing *vis-à-vis* violence, from total vindication and elation that I can recall right now actually; I can literally feel as good right now in reminiscing over it as

the day it happened, the second I broke their skin,” he paused and breathed it in; he smiled as the serotonin indeed flooded him as the memories of fights and domination flashed before his mind’s eye and his reward system too. He made no mention of the bookend to the extremes he hinted -stated- he had felt.

“I see that,” MO said as the *hippocampus* and *orbito-PFC* lit up and dopamine flooded each of sixteen specific zones.

“You see what?” the inmate asked.

“I see your *fMRI* results; *SPECTAs* data; I see your brainwaves and neuroanatomical structures activate and subside; I see the neuronal firing, the pathways, the entrenched trails idiosyncratic to your brain versus others. I see it also in your endocrine system; the elevation of testosterone and epinephrine. I guess I’m saying that I believe you. Your words match your brain waves and metabolic markers,” MO concluded; MO gave the man as much detail as he felt he could comprehend.

“Ah, nice. It is nice to be believed,” the inmate said. He said things people just never say; and so instead of assuming it was other men -the 99% of men- who lied, everyone assumed that if he was saying different things -odd things- then it was he that was the liar. It was a heuristic society used; and so the more honest he was the more deceptive they accused him of being.

The next irony was that they believed his actual lies.

“That’s interesting, I notice a correlate in your *anterio-cingulate* and *nucleus accumbens*; you do feel quite good when believed. You know they all,” MO paused his sentence and motioned with a head nod, a *cabeceo*, toward the other room, “think you’re a psychopath.”

MO and the inmate stared at one another. Again, each breathing in valence; no words were exchanged for a time.

MO measured the maelstrom of air around the nostrils; then further out as each mini-hurricane tumbled away from his face and into the open lab.

“I’ve told them you are not; but these are not people who are quite ready to understand brain science. They have personal inhibitions that prevent them from learning counter-intuitive results and facts,” MO said with his own slight tilt of the head.

“Ah, yes, that’s how the human brain works; I’ve read a little on that. People can’t recall facts -again in scientific studies- can’t recall facts that don’t comport to their politics. What did that nerd say, *facts don’t care about your feelings* ? Well, the actual facts are that man’s feelings don’t care about the facts. But that goofball wouldn’t recognize brain science if it wore a beard, *payot* and a *yarmulke* . Yeah, anyway, it’s,” the inmate paused, “well, it puts men like me at a disadvantage.”

“How so?” MO queried as he scuttled five *nanobots* that were malfunctioning and re-wrote an update to the shared algorithms that he felt had corrupted them.

“Well, I am as far Left as I am Right, politically; I am an anarchist and a fascist both. I harbor the politics of two totally oppositional factions, I guess. So, I can see the facts and follies of every argument. And that makes me open to anything, and yet also willing to close down all discussion and act instantly,” the inmate said as he laced the fingers and the chains between the cuffs bent awkwardly taut.

“How is?” MO began to ask but the inmate just began speaking over him.

“Well, most people are not conflicted, they truly believe their own propaganda; the bullshit of their own side. Right and Left are equally deluded and happy to be so. But I must

suffer with incessant doubt, and yet am forced to act as if I have no such hesitation.

“My internal life is much more complex than theirs, and that requires a metabolic price be paid. I must always have more and more information. I never feel like I know enough because the goddamn dialectic never ends; I can always see the other side. And just -merely- calorically, I need massive inputs just to maintain current levels of brain activity.

“And frankly, sometimes, my hesitation manifests itself. I get thoughtful at exactly the wrong time, and I fail to act. This has caused me more problems than I can recount,” the inmate said with a slight push of the jaw forward like a half open drawer.

“You seem a man of action,” MO said. New parts of his CNS were activated and MO tagged them. He built new files for this state-of-mind.

“I am, compared to most. But I compare myself to myself, and I could have acted more decisively ten thousand times in which I did not. My internal debate has caused hesitation plenty of times; and this was -and is now- a cost. Although, to be frank, I banish hesitation now, even if I feel it, because,” he paused, “well, because my current environment is less modern, less nuanced; the prison is more atavistic. Although, even in the ancestral environment, even among our monkey cousins, the role of politics and alliance-building is real and must be regulated metabolically and I suspect genetically.”

Nobody made mention of the math.

“So, being a tyrant, and a loner -a guy who just fights everyone all the time- is not tenable even inside the walls of an admittedly retrograde detention facility. Even inside, I must play a bit of politics. But, in truth, I am ninety percent less likely to give one fuck about the future now than I was

before my arrest. I could die right now and prefer it to submitting to someone I consider beneath me. And so, I fight nine out of ten times inside, whereas in civilian life I fought one out of a hundred, shit one in a thousand. I'm way more pugilistic now," the inmate said and looked around.

"Quite a statement from a man convicted of forty-six murders," MO said with eyebrows raised. He hadn't yet asked about why the inmate was here -at ADX- instead of Canon City, at the state prison. He held the question in his mind.

"I know, right?" the inmate said with a disinterested cobbling together of each word. He smirked as his head returned to let the eyes gaze upon MO's face.

"Your stress levels, I must say, are low. Cortisol is low," MO said. The man had very low resting heartrate, low cortisol, almost no stress compared to before the gene edits MO had just done; edits done without changing the environment of the inmate; without any change in his training, education, prompts; edits done all at once. And as they expressed themselves the heart rate dropped by ten then eleven percent.

"Look, I still feel the impact of being told what to do by guards; but I've treated them so respectfully that they tend not to overtly lord their power over me. But, I feel the sting at times. However, in regards to the other inmates, I feel no loss of status; no submission. No," he thought a bit before starting back up. "Well, I just feel like none of them have any power over me; and that's not because some of them couldn't easily dispatch my ass," the inmate said this and laughed a bit too eagerly MO thought; but he wasn't sure and so he DM'd Isaiah to check the inmate's sincerity.

"But, they would have to prove it," the inmate said returning to his *bravura* like a pendulum. "This isn't some dominance display; I won't roll over and submit. And it's the submitting



part, that's the part that hurts. *Losing* a fight doesn't feel that bad compared to *refusing* to fight; and losing by dying is downright ennobling. And that's what I do now; I fight to the death. Mine or theirs. And since I'm still alive," he left the sentence unfinished; adding only his grin as copestone. The metal did not gleam; it had turned slightly green.

"But you still play politics; play nice with fellow inmates?" MO asked. Isaiah sent over the data MO asked for.

"Yeah, at times. Because not everything is a goddamn fighting matter. I mean, sometimes, it really isn't worth it. But that's much different than, well, I calibrate that much differently than the modern world. I mean, according to modern dictates, *nothing* is worth fighting for. Jesus, I heard that shit over and over," the inmate said this with a blast of expelled air, a drive of the head back and to the right; with this body language MO was learning to correlate movement with the emotions that populated his brain and body as well. It was like three data points on a graph; the words, the movement, the blast of air and MO plotted it like a course. Isaiah's thoughts kept streaming in and star maps using Kepler red-dwarfs and exo-planets as points of contact appeared in MO's mind as he shuffled them to the side.

"What?" MO asked, "heard what?"

"That whatever was; you know, that whatever was being debated over, that it was quote, *not worth it* . *It isn't worth it, man* ," the inmate said, using his hippie voice to connote contempt for the people who had told him *it was not worth it* . He gave all detractors the voice of the stoned and devil-may-care as if he -himself- was -conversely the archetype of the upright; the assiduous and disciplined.

"From yourself or?" MO asked for clarification. MO let sentences dangle too; he'd learned this was not merely acceptable but expected by humans.

“No, man, from everyone, from every chick or compatriot; even the so-called masculinity movement is filled with guys who call themselves stoics but are just cowards who refuse to be emotional and thus vulnerable. Most iron & blood types are 100% full of shit. They live *bourgeois* little lives and never show their emotions at all. And they call this stoicism, but it’s cowardice.

“And they can’t even keep a tribe of a hundred together. You know the *Wolves* broke up, fucking Donovan couldn’t even stick by his own people, man. It’s pathetic. And there is a reason why: options. Men have options. Jack didn’t need the *Wolves* , so he could abandon them. So, as soon as it got tough on his Instagram-ass he broke off and abandoned them. This is what nobody talks about.

“No modern relationships are worth a fuck unless you can’t afford to leave.

“Real men wear their heart on their sleeve man. Real men fight and lose their shit over insults and affronts. Real men fucking go ape shit. Real men stick it out with comrades no matter what and stick a knife in an enemy over *nothin’* at all,” he said this with that sine wave of a southern drawl that he fetched out like a coin collection given to him by his daddy, a second place trophy of which he was reluctantly proud. He brought it out elliptically -MO noticed as he placed the algorithm upon it; measuring the twang- and Isaiah sent more info by DM. He said the inmate was lying again.

MO saw the data on which words were correlated with deception and he watched the inmate go on.

“Hemingway fought literary critics with his fists, ok? And the whole world says, *no real alpha calls himself an alpha, blah blah* . Fuck that, I’m *sayin’* only a beta or a woman would assume to tell an alpha what he can or cannot say. I call myself an alpha, and I am an alpha. And anyone who wants to argue with me can fight me or shut the fuck up. I have

the alpha genes, martial mindset and pugilistic *bona fides* to prove it," the inmate said because he believed it was true, MO thought as he compared it against the last few deception points. *This thing with Jack Donovan was curious, and curiouser*, he thought to himself.

"A man should be stoic only in the final moments of death. Then be stoic," the inmate said. "For then it is *apropos*. But until then a man should be in love or enraged. And all these cowards advocating stoicism throughout life are weak slaves who desire life over honor; they want to live a long and safe life. Period. They want to avoid trouble. Stay out of jail or the morgue. Keep bridges intact for they can't decide on which side of the river to live on; nor can they swim. Stoicism is the slave's philosophy."

"Why?" MO asked.

"Its central tenet is that you can't change the world, so change yourself. That's the slave's life. An free man *can* change the world and does, or he dies trying. A free man changes the world, even if that means changing the shape of his enemy's skull, or changes the rate at which his society falls apart and into chaos. A free man changes the world; not himself.

"And anyone who disagrees with this can fight me - physically- or shut the fuck up," the inmate said lethargically, his head dipped a bit, his lips moved less, the jaw let the words harmonize -the skull amplify- his argument as he used less and less of his own breath.

MO found this odd. Isaiah sent another DM.

"But in the weak-man's world, in the modern world -the world of women- one is told to remain stoic about their capacity for greatness or great umbrage; not to ever say a word. They say this as if *they* get to set the rules and definitions of what a man is. They say this as if poetry is not

alchemy; as if my words are mere words. It's enough to make a cat laugh. Since when do outsiders define the rules of insiders? But these females and fags try it each and every time.

"I say fuck that; I'll say whatever I want. And if they think I ain't an alpha let them come fight me over it. But they won't. They are *poseurs*. Each and every one of them with their hashtag ninety-two bullshit. Paul saw this. He called ninety-nine percent of the guys with claims to be in the movement to be a hundred percent full-of-shit. They just wanted to *appear* tough, not *be* tough."

"Paul Waggener?" MO asked.

"Yeah, I like that dude. He's one of very few that are sincere.

"But, I mean, shit, I guess even I started to say that -that, *it ain't worth*, shit- to myself. I guess you're right. I bought into the propaganda. But, obviously I got over that," inmate 16180339 laughed genuinely, and MO watched his brain activate with the mirth; it made MO smile too. The inmate was laughing -and MO was smiling- over forty-six murders that proved the inmate had indeed gotten over the notion that *it was not worth it* to make one's rivals pay a price for their insults. The cloud recorded it all.

"Yeah, seems so," MO then said.

"Anyway, like all true things, it can be taken too far in all directions. Our society is too pusillanimous but likely I'm too pugilistic and so, at times -when I'm being reasonable- I decline the overt fight. But, I won't allow myself to feel one moment's diminution of pride without some form of retaliation. It's my only metric now," the inmate said, and it was 75.4% true according to the PET scans MO ran.

"And if someone insults you?" MO asked.

"I make them pay; or," he nodded as he thought, "I make them make me pay with my life. I make them back that

insult up with a capacity and willingness to kill me dead.”

“It’s that Manichean for you?” MO asked.

“I am old-school Christian that way; I’m *chiaroscuro* , like *Caravaggio* , the painter,” he raised his eyebrows and waited for MO to research the man and his art. MO did exactly that as he noticed one salient thing.

“He was a murderer too, huh? An artist and murderer; the inspiration for *Rembrandt* and the *chiaroscuro* movement, and a very combative man,” MO said aloud as he read the Italian’s biography.

“The comparison was not an accident MO, my man. I’m not as erudite as you, my brain cannot compete with your speed and brute strength, but I have a bit of a maze in here,” the inmate reached to tap his head, but the shackles restrained. And thus his head bowed more than the hands were raised to just below the chest. He felt a slight chagrin.

“Well, wherever. I have lateral connections that are tantamount to, well, I see my life as one giant art project. Life artistry; even incarcerated; even here and now. All of it can be seen through that lens if one has the eye for it,” the inmate said.

“Expatiate,” MO asked.

“A normal man will over focus on staying out of trouble,” the inmate said. He saw a flash -like a page before him- of the quote from Crowley:

*I embrace hardship and privation with ecstatic delight; I want everything the world holds; I would go to prison or the scaffold for the sake of the experience... this is the keystone of my life, the untrammelled delight in every possibility of existence, possible or actual .*

MO was reminded -by the algorithms placed inside the *bots* that had burrowed into the inmate’s flanks- to watch the *toxoplasmosis* virus work on his genome, especially his

*DD40* genes and their proteins; he then routed them back through the most used -and thus largest- connected neural pathways and linked them up to all manner of odd brain modules and enzymes. *It was labyrinthine indeed* , MO thought. He marked each coded protein; he marked the axons, dendrites and the pre-synaptic load as the inmate spoke.

He plugged it all into an algorithm he had designed 8.8 seconds ago and let it work as he returned to listening to the inmate's speech midway through.

"...have, well, I *had* noticed, at some point, that this was no way to live a life. The irony is they say I'm ruled by my emotions as if they are any less ruled by theirs. It's only that my emotions include a need to stand up for myself, for one, and be creative and interesting for, well, additionally, I guess. Additionally.

"These squares are ruled by fear. Stoicism is not a controlling of the emotions; it's the allowing of fear of consequences to overrule your emotions for vengeance. That's all it is. They fear trouble; they aren't rational. You've read the work on neuroanatomy and the *limbic* brain and the *neo-cortex* . Shit, these twits -these men who call me too visceral- they are dominated by their emotions, but their emotions are almost exclusively fear and pain avoidance and inhibition. But they call it reason; rationality; stoicism. How am I to argue with people like this who have 1% of my erudition and cognitive power? How? I might as well argue with feminists or liberals or fucking children.

"Anyway, they lack the courage requisite to be *in trouble* . Shit, but where would mankind be without the trouble makers of *Socrates*, *Martin Luther*, *John Brown*, or shit, *Jesus* himself? *O ð inn* was the *berserker* not the *stoicist* -er. And the artists, man the artists who were trouble makers, without them where would we be? *Mishima* ? Fucker invaded

army barracks then put himself to the sword. But, your average man thinks he can hide and duck and cover his whole life and not pay a massive price," the inmate said. His chest heaved and he felt his heart thud and his lungs feel shallow and his hands go slightly numb.

"Pay a price, how?" MO asked as the *bots* reported back on blood *Ph* and stress hormones in the inmate. He saw the *bots* had turned the new gene edits off; he was back to normal, heart rate up; cortisol too.

"Well, look, at a personal level, these guys who avoid trouble at all cost live denuded lives; they live pathetic lives. Their lives are dominated by relatively high-level cortisol stress, betas feel high stress actually, and low serotonin, low testosterone, low affect, low self-esteem, low energy, and incessant feelings of shame and the emotional consequences of cowardice.

"They feel like shit," he said.

"I know guys that walk around like a defeated animal, man. Shoulders -shoulders bent in- head down, always apologizing and making ecumenical statements as if he was sorry to be alive. He says to me as I'm telling some bitch what is what, he says, *uh, that is no way to get things accomplished*, ok? He's afraid of his own shadow. And wants me to fear mine. That is the norm. But, that is not a life. That's mere existence," the inmate said and pursed the lips.

"*The valiant never taste of death but once*, " MO said.

"Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* , nice job," the inmate smiled weakly; his gums hurt. His neck felt like a fusion reactor now; and he tried to remember when it had stopped hurting; for there was a moment while talking to MO where he didn't feel such pain.

"It's difficult for me to comprehend it in any manner other than intellectually," MO said. "I am instantiated, as you can

see, but I do not have *sub-cortical* analogues. So, while my composition is delimited -on purpose, you see, as feature not bug- while it is delimited by instantiation -as was necessary for me to perform goal-seeking orientational behavior- I was not outfitted with *sub-cortical* brain modules nor an enteric neuronal system. I hate to admit it, but I can understand your point intellectually, but not at the level you mean it. I cannot get the passion of it. Not really," MO admitted.

"Yeah, well, you and everyone else," the inmate said with resignation.

"You think other men are denuded of these brain modules as well?" MO asked.

"I was being slightly facetious," the inmate said.

"Oh, yes I see, yes, yes, oh ok, that makes sense now. You are saying, despite their engineering -or rather their biology- that they still do not seem to understand what it is to be alive as a human," MO said, now getting the point.

"Yeah, despite the advantages of having the very systems that should give them these feelings, these feelings of pride and honor and masculinity as noble, as ennobling, they go dead inside and pretend not to have a clue. And you could have stuck with the word, *engineering* , and, well there was no need to update it to *biology* ," the inmate smiled weakly again.

"See, that time I got the joke," MO said stoically, "I'm catching on."

"I bet you are; I say that with almost no malice," the inmate laughed a little and felt like putting his hands on MO, about the shoulders and neck, like chimps do in the wild. His hands though were hemmed in, and he didn't even stretch this time against the chains. *I too am catching on*, he thought as he gazed down at the hands. The fingers were



splayed and the ring finger moved in a shaking way side-to-side just 3mm.

"Freud said that death anxiety was the substratum for belief in God, what's your opinion?" MO asked.

"I used to think that way. But, I now think that God is merely an ideal in man's mind, the idea of the best. And abstraction -and look, this is in no way a description of the ontological truth, there in fact could be a God, I have no idea- but I'm saying that man invents God as an ideal, and worships and fears him the same way we do when we reify any idea; any abstraction. We need not fear death to fear judgement from on high.

"I mean, I just spent ten minutes explaining that I am ruled by my need for self-respect. You think that isn't a God? I mean, we all elevate ideas, abstractions that began as modes of being, as behaviors, right?" the inmate asked. The inmate was lying massively now; and MO -with Isaiah's help- could see his level were all well beyond normal deception. He was barely being 35% veridical.

"Animals participate in dominance hierarchies, creatures very old, very rudimentary," MO said. He did not acknowledge the waxing and waning of deception.

"Older than the trees of the forest, yeah," the inmate said. "So, the social dynamic of being up and down, in relations to others is ancient and it's how our nervous systems evolved. We're what we are because of dominance hierarchies. We know this."

"It seems to check out, I agree," MO nodded. He saw the *parietal* region activation and that the inmate was lying specifically about God. He didn't know how, not yet. But, MO could see that the inmate was lying specifically about God.

"And so, with hierarchies -natural hierarchies- comes admiration, emulation, the neuronal prompting *via* the

dopaminergic and serotonergic systems toward an ideal behavioral model. We try to be the best; and often as saplings, we lock onto someone older and braver and more adept and elevate them, we make heroes of them.

"This is even what little chimps do, they reach their arms out in sympathy, in mimicry, in emulation with their big brother or father in the tree -who is in real life reaching to grab a piece of fruit- this is emergent empathy," the inmate said. MO noticed that there was a .7 correlation between the inmate's use of four or five syllable words and tangential deception. A .65 correlation between any citation of a fact or study or book, and him hiding something orthogonal to the point. And the word -the twenty-five cent word- and the fact or study cited were not incorrect, they were true, but the more he used them, the more MO saw the inmate lied about other things.

*Things unspoken*, MO thought.

"Mimicry," MO began re-reading all of *de Waal's* work, the way a human will recall a read work, or a memory or a fact. He downloaded and uploaded more and more back and forth to and from the inmate in a circuit so that the man would not know what was being taught versus what was being learned.

"Yeah, and so," the inmate kept on, "from the analysis of the nervous system, we can see that copying behavior is encoded, and that memetic substrates for that behavior must include some level of admiration. One must admire those who we emulate. And conversely, we have those we hold in contempt precisely because they act in ways that aren't just disgusting to us, but we see the behaviors in a way, *that if we did them too*, if we mimicked that contemptible behavior, well, we'd be as contemptible as they. So, we feel a kind of proxy shame.

“Imagine that, we abstract both *admirable* and *contemptible* behavior in others, and abstract it in the mind, as pure thought. It’s quite something; of course, nobody even pays any attention to it, they just think it’s normal. It is normal, I guess, but only because of millions -billions- of years of evolution made it normal. But, people just go about their day totally unaware of the neural underpinnings of their core belief structures.

“They *gotta* feel it; thinking it will go nowhere. Admiration and contempt predate cognition in my opinion. You can’t copy anyone you don’t admire; and you can’t prevent yourself copying anyone unless you hold them in deep contempt,” the inmate said and paused just a few beats longer than he normally did. MO saw the circuit between stay at the same pace; electricity and biochemistry all in a whirl.

“Anyway, all that is to say is that God is not death anxiety, not totally. He is our ideal, our highest ideal. And that is good. Man, without that, modern man, is totally lost. And I for one, although I am not exactly a believer, see the value in God. I broke with the new atheists over this very issue; once I understood the connection between neuro-anatomy, modes of being, abstractions in mind-space *via* images and art and finally narrative art, you know, myth and religion and literature? Once I got that, I got God.”

He paused. He watched the fingers -again- on the right hand tremble just a bit, like horse withers. He jammed the tongue in between the back teeth and pressed down.

“But, look, utopian ideas are -despite what Oscar Wilde said- utopian ideas are tantamount to saying that all men must be murdered,” the inmate said. MO noticed that he would go on and on for long-spells and then end a series of somewhat reasonable ideas with a cleaver -metaphorically- to the head.

“Why?” MO asked. What the inmate had just said did not follow from all that wind up; it was like the wrong punch line to a long set up.

“Well, because utopia demands conformity to the ideal; unless you’re happy with the system, you’re a heretic, and heretics must be dispatched. Communism was the single greatest -or grandest in scope I mean, the largest- utopian idea that rose up as God dissolved under rationalism’s advance. Greatest since -you know- God Himself.”

“Man must have an ideal, like I was saying. Look, the ape reaches in sympathy with his hero, his arm outstretched upon the ground, as his father -his hero- actually grasps the fruit above him in the tree. You can call this pragmatic, and it is in some way. But, it’s hero-worship too. And, just as this happens on the *veldt*, on the savanna, well, in man’s mind, he must reach -from the ground- in sympathy with his god; his god that he looks up at in the tree,” the inmate said.

“And so with Christianity thus killed by *Hume* and *Newton* and *Descartes*,” MO said, prompting the inmate.

“And others, yes. As that happened a new god had to arise, something to reach for sympathetically, in emulation, from the ground; and Marx articulated it, but it was already in the genes of man. Marx didn’t invent it. You ever try not to love or admire or try not to hold something in contempt? Get all zen? Well, maybe *you* can avoid these emotions, but man cannot. Man feels first. He’ll find reasons later.

“Like I said, man had to grasp at something ideal; it is in his nature. Man was always gonna mimic something. Dostoyevsky said *that man struggles for nothing so incessantly and painfully as for something to worship*. And it’s not just his nature but the nature of his fathers and fathers’ fathers; it’s older than mammals themselves. Not that idiots like Stan Goff who says that, *man’s only innate*

*trait is that he has no innate traits* , not that goofy fucks like that get it.

“I mean, if you can dispense with unlettered post-modernists and Left-wing shit heads like that guy, then it’s fairly obvious that man has a nature and that nature includes love and hate, admiration and contempt and if you take away his Christian God he will replace it with something, and that something in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was socialism, communism in the east and rationalism and materialism and consumerism in the west; fucking democracy growing like a tumor; fucking everyone gets to vote, gets a job, gets a girl. I mean, you think the west ain’t socialist? Democracy and monogamy, each guy -each fella- gets a ballot and a broad?

“That’s sexual socialism, man. And brother, you thought the Christian God was hardcore,” the inmate laughed, “these modern democrats in the west and the Communists in the east were even less forgiving than the Old Testament *Yahweh* . Heretics under Communism? Look the fuck out, man. Look at how as democracy increased, even in America, more and more men ended up right here in jail. As we got more people voting and more men laid, more men with money and opportunity, the more the rules cut everyone down, fucked everyone out of jobs, ostracisms, each infraction a felony. This is no joke. Democracy is the disease; it is socialism with a friendly face.”

The inmate looked around for an audience, but he saw MO like apparition, looked passed him; he saw only grey walls with veins of green ivy marbling them; the *stelae* hung like stone doors and small blue-white lights glinted above them and astride the ivy and tight-bells of flowers; he saw austerity being encroached upon and his joints hurt he now felt. He was embarrassed by all he had said and all he knew he didn’t know.

“And they were pretty expansionist,” MO added.

“Oh yeah, like Islam, they,” his chagrin alighted like startled birds; he paused. “It wasn’t enough that *they* believed it, *you* had to believe it too. And they couldn’t wait to spread the word. *Have you heard the good news?* ” he said with an affected laugh.

“No, what?” MO asked.

“No, no, that’s what Christian evangelicals say, they ask, *hey brother, have you heard the good news? He is risen* . Anyway, I was making a play on that, but putting it in the mouths of the commies; because they were like, *have you heard the good news?* and then they gave you a redeemer not unlike Christ, who could wash away all sin,” the inmate said.

“Who was that?” MO wanted specifics.

“Well, it was the ideal of Communism, the fucking State. See, the Leftist thinks that all problems are singular; reducible. Marx said *all of history was the history of class conflict*. He had a scientific -quote scientific- analysis that reduced all human misery to class conflict. So, if everything is a nail, then all one need is a hammer,” the inmate said.

“And maybe a sickle?” MO added.

“Cute; you are clever, aren’t you?” the inmate was genuinely amused with his interlocutor all at once in a burst.

“Thanks,” MO said with a grin. He collated all the data and the inmate had scored low on his honesty quotient, high on his causality, and mid-range on his allostatic parameters.

“But you get my point, the commies reduced all human misery to class warfare, and if their god won, then man would be redeemed. It was as Manichean as Christianity; it was as black and white. And people’s brains are hardwired for a narrative like that. That’s why idiotic Leftists speak in

slogans and *cliché* without embarrassment. They truly believe that all issues can be reduced to class or capitalist greed or whatever. Maybe they'll add gender conflict if they are truly capacious in their analysis," the inmate rolled his eyes at his own sarcasm.

"I read up on that Goff character while you spoke, he speaks in gibberish now, very *argot* -driven and post-modern in its abstruseness; but his earlier book, *Full Spectrum Disorder* , was cogent," MO said.

"Yeah, his politics are goofy, but he at least recognized the power of guerilla fighting against a modern military; the inherent limitations of the State's modern martial force. He saw the cracks in the current army and that its strengths were its ponderous problems too.

"I was like that; I was a total Marxist. But, anyway, he -Goff- truly went off the deep end and reading him is like reading *Foucault* : total gibberish formatted to sound smart while parroting Left-wing *clichés* and ignoring biology as if we are all computer programs," the inmate said and realized what he had just said and grimaced. "Sorry, no offense."

"Oh, it's fine," MO said, "I knew what you meant. But, back to Goff, do you think civilians in this country could overwhelm the US military?"

"I *know* it; I don't *think* it. Castro overthrew Batista in eighteen months with just twelve guys. All they had were shotguns and M1 carbines at first; landing at *Playa Las Coloradas* in a boat meant for no more than twelve, by the way; a goddamn boat off course, late, leaking, and overloaded with eighty-two malnourish, seasick and desperate men; men killed at once in the initial *enfilade* . Batista in US planes cut them all down in the first hour; all but twelve. Eleven and the apostle.

“And by the time they marched into the high-country of the *Sierra Maestra* to begin their guerilla rebellion, they were back down to the capacity for that ship -after all- and they had no more men than Jesus had and look what *He* did,” the inmate smiled at his own remark. He let the veil on his hidden ontology slip just a bit. He bit the lip. His hands gripped the air. The knuckles felt like they might pop.

“People don’t understand that all the prayers of the pious and the ink of scholars don’t mean shit compared to blood and soil of heroes and villains. *Coriolanus* respected *Aufidius* more than all of senatorial Rome; he lamented the pusillanimous public he protected; he lionized his enemy above the coward and speech-maker to his rear flank,” the inmate said as his biochemistry roiled, his blood boiled, like a revelatory sea.

“Do you foresee a civil war in the US?” MO asked. He took note of the *Evo/la* plagiarism, the inclusion of fiction, and the inner bombast that made the inmate drunk on rage; but MO made no comment -showed no sign- of what he just heard and saw.

“I think it’s inevitable; the center cannot hold. You cannot defy the laws of nature forever; you cannot negotiate with gravity forever. Eventually nature puts its foot down.”

“What is the problem?” MO asked.

“The country is taking its most violent and competent people -i.e., men, white men- and giving them nothing to lose. I told Michael, I warned him, don’t ever give a man like me nothing to lose,” the inmate said.

“Michael Swinyard, one of your victims?” MO asked.

“He was no victim; he was a perpetrator that got what was coming to him. But yes, that’s the *fella* I was referring to,” the inmate said as he nodded.

“What did he say when you told him that?” MO asked.



“He said, *well , you always have something to lose ;* and then he mentioned something about loss of liberty. He thought I gave a fuck about jail,” the inmate laughed genuinely. He briefly -and he thought surreptitiously- allowed himself to think of God and the task God had given him, and the electricity to the parietal lobe again shocked across many folds of brain flesh as MO measured it and filed it away.

“He didn’t see it coming, *eh ?*” MO asked.

“Not even a glimpse of it, no. And the look on his face when I pointed that M4 at him with all the pre-ordained malice of a meteor out of the sky *en route* to his blue planet; man, that look was beautiful. He was truly confused and yet, he immediately understood how fucked he was. He didn’t even beg for his life; he knew it was pointless. He knew I was committed.

“Plus, all the money was on the table, he couldn’t bribe me, I was taking the cash with or without his sanction. He had nothing to give me except his life. And I took it along with a hundred large in cash,” the inmate said. The inmate knew he left many things out in his *rechauffe* , as prolix as he was, he knew he cobbled together the rough edges of life with smooth ones in the retelling. He made that night of the murders of Michael and his friends into art; he embellished, he edited, he invented narratives for dead men, he cut short his own story, he lied about odd things and even told strange truths.

MO watched the inmate’s brain light up as he relived that grand moment of revenge. He saw all the pleasure centers and dominance hubs mediated by the dopaminergic systems and how happy the inmate was; how large he seemed and felt. The inmate looked up to the left with the eyes and the head slightly raised too.

He seemed to grow like a super nova star; his breath imbued him with girth and coronal glow. MO began to understand the power of self-respect, of the martial mindset, he saw, now, the *raison d'ê tre* of the man *who took no shit* . *What good was liberty*, MO asked himself, *what good is the so-called liberty of the timid man, who lived outside jail -alive for 90 years- but never once acted nor felt like a true man? How can one call such a life free at all? How is it even life?* MO asked himself. *Like Trump had asked, what's the point of having nuclear weapons if one agrees to never use them ahead of time?*

"Explain why the civil war; why not political disagreements and compromise within the political system?" MO then asked. He understood the inmate's point -about liberty and timidity- he understood it intellectually, but it was filed away like everything else and he moved on.

"Because life is war; it's always war, and a republic like ours is based upon the idea that we are one people. Look, we deal in fictions. We say men can be convinced with information, right? Every scold in politics is telling strong men how to be nice; every dipshit on Twitter is telling weak men how to be strong, with mantras and advice and information over and over and these fucks never learn. They never get in shape, never start a business, never get the girl. Why?"

"Why?" MO asked in return.

"Because information is useless without the torque converter of emotion below. It's like adding more and more horsepower -i.e. information- to an engine and never once hooking up the transmission -i.e., the emotions- ok?

"And most men can't be alphas. By definition -genetically, emotionally- it's impossible. But Americans have been sold this idea that every shithead on Twitter insists upon: that all

we need is better conversations and more information. It's so wrong that it's dangerously wrong.

"All that great info online-alphas give real-life-betas is a waste.

"It's a revving motor with no drive train to drop into gear. And America is itself based on the idea that all that matters is ideas. America is the catastrophe of this idea: blood and iron do not matter, that all that matters is ideas; that all of us can be American based upon mere ideas; ideals. It's fundamentally wrong and stupid and science shows this. Biology shows this. And I ain't smart enough to say the math shows it; but I bet it does.

"There is no American; there are only hyphenated Americans: African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Gay-Americans, trans-Americans, and on and on. This was always true, even when it was just English-Americans and Scot-Americans. Now it's merely obvious, glaring; but it was always true. There was never a unified America.

"And what," he asked, "did they -after all this splintering over the last forty years- did they think white Americans weren't going to huddle up and say, *ok, if these are the rules, then I guess these are the rules* . And white Americans obviously have half of their ranks split by leftists Stalinist types, but even with that, we still are the largest group. Right wing, libertarian and apolitical white Americans represent thirty, forty percent of the population. That is plenty large enough to fight."

"Large enough?" MO wanted clarification.

"Yeah, look, people are like lizards and wolves and whatever, we size each other up and if we are evenly matched, as *Sun Tzu* says, *we fight* . If we we're outmatched we'd have to compromise, but we aren't. So, we won't. It's

human nature. Shit, we may lose, but we won't -at a certain point- we won't sit back anymore.

"Secondly, the political class used to care. But they're so corrupt now that all they care about is protecting their enclaves. They no longer see the country as something to defend. It would be like if the soldiers in a trench -you know, fighting a war- only cared about their little trench and watched with indifference as the enemy flanked them and ran into the interior but left their little trench alone. Our politicians, Right and Left, are all pusillanimous business men and rationalists -they have no god anymore, money is their god- they are all pussies, *defacto* atheist, consumerists, or they are active Islamists like Keith Ellison or black nationalists like Maxine Waters and the Black Caucus.

"Look, the war has begun; they are coming for us; and the politicians don't care. The republic cannot cohere when half the country, the blacks, feminists, leftists, are trying to tear it down. And make no mistake, they are attempting full on destruction, that isn't even debated now, they want to abolish the free-market, masculinity, all our cultural icons and legacy, repeal the second amendment, usurp the first; it's war. They openly call for white genocide.

"It's not mere disagreement; shit, they object to everything America stands for; everything. And the people charged with protecting it, the political elites, they either openly agree with the nihilists or they are too corrupt and weak to care. So, that leaves the half of the country who still likes the shit the country was founded upon -still believes in right and wrong, in transcendental values imparted by Christianity in the north and honor in the south- that leaves only them to defend it.

"And that means civil war; because they have no formal power, they have only vigilante -or extra-judicial- justice at

their disposal. It's not even debatable really; when half the country hates the country and its values, and when those in charge won't defend it, that means, by definition the other half must defend it and defend it by force. Otherwise it's suicide. Look, it's *when* , not *if* at this point. Even Trump can't stop it, because he is outflanked by weak men and women in every domain, that fucking fag Kushner and his feminist wife is running the White House not Trump," the inmate said.

"What is your religion?" MO asked; he saw an opening and took it; he measured the nerves at the dorsal-horn. He thought that pain made men bent and bending appeared like kneeling too. He felt the numbers -the data- from the *bots* come in again and he walked to the counter and slid the hand -as if brushing off detritus- and with his sharpened finger pads laid down -carved- one more number set and one more hyperbolic equation into the concrete slab.

He let the dust stay in the slight depressions.

"That my enemies ought to be dead," the inmate said. He saw Exodus again on thin paper, he heard the crack of the turn of each page, he recalled the way the leaves appeared both fragile and likely to endure no matter what. The words of the Pharaoh came on and he pretended not to notice how they applied to him over time. Instead he thought of the verse before, of the wilderness that had shut them in; thinking next of the Pharaoh's chariot.

MO turned back from the slab and the inmate's grin rose again, crookedly, like the worn guillotine raised between each noble head removed; the bronzen tooth absorbed MO's gaze. Then the inmate said one last sentence; pronounced deeply and without any intention of adding to it nor taking any of it back:

"And it ain't enough that I believe it, they have to believe it too."

## 12. What's so Civil about War anyway?

Assassination by List could be very useful if the list is accurate

The Revised Boy Scout Manual [Burroughs, William S]

"Nothing is true everything is permitted," Last words of *Hassan-i Sabbah* , the Old Man of the Mountain

[Ibid]

Complexity is only resolved by collapse

Antifragile [Taleb, Nassim]

### I. 2019 e.v.

Nick Metz closed the door and held the phone close to his chest.

The Mayor of Denver was on the other end and Metz -the Chief of the Aurora Police- had to think.

He was worried his thoughts might leak out and so he held the phone to his body and processed what he'd just heard. He looked out his office window and saw the edge of the parking lot. Radio cars were coming and going and, yes, the Mayor had told him to stand down. It was said twice and in two different ways. Metz put the phone to his ear again and he thought of his salary, \$112,890 annually, his take-home car -the burgundy Ford fusion- that sat in the parking lot now, and he thought of his daughters in private school.

He recalled how his wife had demanded it, and how he didn't understand because when it came up the first time he'd been dealing with the Police Union and was absent minded -at dinner- as she spoke. He remembered he was eating, cutting his food, drinking his water, watching her wrists on the table and hearing murmuring as the meeting he'd had that day re-played in his head. He remembered so

much considering how little he was paying attention, he thought.

In fact, that was what he recalled most now as the Mayor spoke again into his ear, into his brain, into his past and then laid out like a road he must walk down.

He remembered something his mother had once said, but he didn't bother to recall the exact words.

He hadn't been paying attention at dinner that night until his wife exploded in anger and the glass had moved in front of him like something falling from above -but it was something thrown from in front- and he recalled flinching as water hit his face. The glass skipped once on the table and hit him in the bicep and then fell to the floor. The clear glass and transparent water all looked like one thing to him. He'd pulled a neck muscle that he'd never complain of, he'd got water in his eye, he'd blinked a lot and that eye went fuzzy with fluid. And then he heard her screaming. She'd been yelling at him about the girls and the animals -he remembered her saying *animals* - and this had made him think that the dogs had done something. *Their dogs*, he had thought -in remembrance- as the Mayor kept speaking -in the now- of what his officers were to do.

Metz's Lieutenant had been in the office four-minutes ago and taken a hand written 10-401 form from the Chief. The Chief knew that a twelve car contingent would go first to the ICE facility run by GEO Group. He'd been given reports that there were 1,500 protestors but that more were streaming in.

The Mayor said something about the *right side of history* and the Chief thought of Aurora and Denver conjoined like two halves of something, *maybe like two halves of a heart*, he thought. He then thought -back to the dinner memory- that his wife had meant not the dogs but the kids -the other kids- at school were the *animals* and that she didn't care

how much the tuition was but that her girls -she had said *her girls* - were not going to public schools.

*Period, that's final*, she'd said.

And he saw that she was standing above him now at the dinner table, and he held the knife in his left hand, the fork in the right and he'd noticed that the knife had the smallest serrations he'd ever seen, it was like a dolphin, a polished-nickel toothy dolphin. His chicken-fried steak was barely cut at all. *I've been sawing on it for how long?* he'd asked himself. He remembered thinking that as his wife stood over him at the table and yelled about her girls -*her girls* - and that they'd not go to school with *animals* -*animals* she'd said- and he saw the fork's tines were short, *very short*, he thought.

Kent Denver School at 4000 E Quincy in Englewood - *telephone 303.770.7660* he thought- was where they were going.

She'd told him they were -the twins were, in fact- enrolled there today. His wife had written them a check for the deposit of \$11,900. But the balance of \$44,000 was due in six-weeks. He'd recalled that number as the Mayor told him of the joint-Denver-Aurora co-operation budget and how there was over a million-dollars in it as of June-one. *He had said, June one* , the Chief heard both times: the time the Mayor said it and now in the recall inside his head.

He couldn't remember if what he recalled was from just now, as he stood in his office or before -from dinner- or if the memory he had while at dinner was what he was thinking about. He got his times all mixed up and couldn't recall if the memory -of the union meeting- was from that dinner or this conversation on the phone.

"Yes sir, I agree," Metz said to something, to fill in a pause that had come over the phone. The Mayor had thanked him



and he thanked the Mayor. He felt like watching the cars in the lot leave and the spaces open up.

And so the Chief stared and held the disconnected phone in his hand.

MO was feeling eager for more data, but also desirous of hemming it all in. It was like having money sprayed at you, you're both excited but frantic to catch it all, as much as you can. But you realize you only get to keep what you can catch. He was excited for the access but enthusiastic most for hemming all this data in.

He watched the scene through the iPhone camera and microphone and had both the Mayor and the Chief up on the screens in the lab as the song played:

*On this day, all the trees in Rhodesia are aflame*

*And the lions overflowing with vengeance for the pines...*

MO scanned the images from the protest again; for faces. He zoomed in and out and saw the ragged treeline of the park.

*Vizguerre was there again* , MO noticed. He noticed the American flag pulled down and the Mexican flag raised. He measured the anger -on their *dmPFC* - the cortisol, epinephrine, androgens, the gut bacteria and the *staphylococcus* around their noses and fingernails. He thought of her name, *viz* -which means, 'in other words'- and *guerre* , meaning 'war'.

Jeanette *Vizguerre* -an illegal alien- was speaking to the media about the flag -the American flag turned upside-down, sprayed painted with slurs against the police, and ragged at the edges- and she'd said that she, *wanted to look forward not back* .

MO let the song play in the lab as the conversation between the Chief and Denver Mayor replayed in background of his

mind.

The images from the ICE facility ran on a loop. MO let the facial recognition algorithm run, but he preferred the genetic samples the *bots* had recovered at the scene. He had the genomes of each person at the facility that day. "Cops and crooks," he said aloud as the *bots* received his nod to implant three molecules under the skin: at ankle, elbow, and sternum. Each molecule would travel toward the heart over a three-day period -picking up immune system cells along the way- and combine at the pulmonary artery most starboard. Once combined he could control the flow of blood like the allostatic system itself. He could throttle up or down based on words they used, clothes they wore, places they went, thoughts they had.

"Anything I want," MO said into the austere gray lab.

He saw all four chambers of the heart, each heart in the 2,679 people he'd attached the *bots* to: 2,591 protestors and 78 law enforcement officers.

He saw the blood flow and each cell, each platelet, each organ tissue stretched like tarpaulin, each pericardium like a double-hulled ship -filled with fluid- and each *sinoatrial* cell in the right atrium of the heart. He saw electricity run like firewire, like wire from detonator to dynamite, he saw each spark and fuse burn from CNS to these pacemaker cells, he saw the blood flow all around the body like the highways around the city itself.

He had the city on one screen, with Speer *blvd* , and Lincoln *ave* , and *Zuni st* , and *Cherokee* , and *Arapaho* , and he zoomed out from these causeways and corridors and cobblestone streets and saw the Indians from these tribes buried in creek-bed and kurgans and he saw the civil war president alive and bent and with bone-joints as large as connecting rods on rig-diesels all appear in his mind like avatars, and he saw the heart of each person there at the

protest and he saw each vein and artery as his cognition contracted and unfurled to each level of analysis; each zoom in and out.

*The heart has the power to self-start*, he thought, spontaneous impulses sent like a hawk through the conducting system, and the *sinoatrial node* developed a rhythm like a metronome. *A pacemaker in fact*, he thought as he had the 3D printer build another horologe and hourglass and sundial that he could array on the slab.

The twelve-inch-high metronome made of mahogany and iron and brass springs sat still as he pushed on it with the index finger.

He now had control.

He sent another algorithm to the *bots* to open flow of *electro-biochems* to the *motor-cortex* and the right hemisphere of everyone at that location; they would hear voices of the ancients like schizophrenics and shaman and the priests of the steppe. They'd have augmented connection between the right-brain and diminished connection between the rest of the brain and the body; and the heart would set the pace. *Today they'd wake up and would feel bad, like they were dying*, MO thought, *unless they went to war. Only war would dissipate the cavitation of energy, anxiety; the maelstrom, the watery part of the body's world.*

The song played:

*Has faith corroded with neglect? Can we ever hide hurt?*

*At least at night the harvest sun's yoke is rising like the rebel smoke*

*Beyond the ocean and swirls...*

MO asked himself, *who would take over from here?* He read, "and they continued three years without war," from First

Kings. The pages appeared in the mind of MO but not the cloud. He had built a room within a room in his mind now, and it was like a cog, with five teeth, and it was deep and tall, and mottled-grey and filled with the inmate, the Governor, and all the people he had met and seen, and at the center was himself and he cast a shadow under the lights inside his vision which had words at times, *“who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord and said, I will persuade him.”*

The song played:

*What a hollow promise from hollow men, what a shallow grave for shallow men*

*You're the bull that paws the earth, the leopard that reaches to run*

*You're the crocodile that eats the sun.*

## **II. 2020 e.v.**

Isaiah made coffee instead.

He let the AV-feed run as he thought of other things.

His hamstrings were tight and he walked on the balls of his feet. The screen showed the parking garage across from the Lindsey Flanigan building, the courthouse between Colfax and 14<sup>th</sup> .

It was over the post office and a Subway shop, it was concrete and steel and had reserved parking at edges and by the elevators. It was 65.4% full today.

Isaiah breathed in and checked in on the algorithms as they each reported in like cells conducting their part of the message of a thought, the molecules of electricity of a charge, the drop of water in a stream. He breathed.

Again, he breathed.

The screen in the lab was facing him -and him alone- in his corner. He had reduced brightness so it was barely a black glow in the back corner of the lab. He arrived to see it just as the man had backed the grey truck -with a grey topper- into the last parking stall on the east side of the garage, facing north toward the courthouse.

Isaiah drank his coffee as he read the heat signature of the man move to the bed of the truck from inside the cab. He saw cold metal assemble in his hot hands, a hot chest lay on the elevated bench, a hot head then point north and then a cold suppressor behind the netting that remained as the rear window to the topper descended into the tailgate.

He checked on the gold coin he'd turned to lead; the copper ingot he'd modified and thus allowed to conduct the correct electric charge.

A moment passed and then the cool-at-tip and warm-at-base 655-grain bullet exited the barrel -the .510" bullet-base *swaging* , conforming to the .50" diameter barrel as it rifled in a spin as fast as a pulsar star- and left a shock wave that only Isaiah saw from the rear of the truck at 3,029 feet-per-second. The sound -dragging its feet- waited a moment to reach him as the bullet had already gone in and out of the cop down at the entrance to the courthouse. The head collapsed in on itself as the lower jaw and neck exploded in nova, glass behind the cop shattered and splintered and the entire universe of the man, the outer cosmos of his compatriots, and the suburbs of star-systems of the anarchists around him all absorbed the flash and dark failure of everything here-to-fore.

The city was now at war.

### **III. 2022 e.v.**

The inmate rolled his eyes.

The screen went blank.

“So?” Isaiah asked; prompting him.

“So what?” the inmate asked. He didn’t care about politics or these dead Antifa losers -their heads exploding in large pieces & mist under their black masks like the opening break of the rack on a billiard table- nor the dead cops from the other videos either. Isaiah had been showing him these videos for months, *years maybe* , he thought. He recalled seeing one chest explode; one heart targeted among all those headshots. He thought too of the way the clear glass turned blue when it shattered but did not fall from the frame.

“So, what did you *see* ?” Isaiah asked.

“I saw head shots, about five of them,” the inmate said, “and I saw the crowd disperse fast as fuck after that.” He laughed and side-eyed the counter as the water sat there in his glass. He wondered how Isaiah had gotten images of it from the POV of the shooter, looking out over the barrel of the rifle, the can, and down into the crowd. He wondered - since they had satellite and courthouse camera-capture imaging- why so many of these videos were not seen from above.

He assumed Isaiah hid most things from him. *I wish he’d hide even more, these videos are tedious* , he thought.

“Say some more,” Isaiah said as he had frozen the image on the screen; it was a black background, a rubber mat in the bed to the truck; ammo cans; a book to the left of the left hand of the gunman; the cover distinct; the thickness white, lined, and obviously oversized.

“*All death is but of the body,* ” the inmate began to quote Carlyle , “*not of the essence or the soul; all destruction, by violent revolution is but new creation on a wider scale.*

*Odinism was Valour, Christianity was Humility, a nobler kind of Valour. No thought that ever dwelt honestly as true in the heart of man was but an insight into God's truth on man's part and has an essential truth in it which endures all changes ."*

"And what did you see ?" Isaiah said with increasing annoyance.

"Crowd was bigger this time," the inmate said as he thought of the one man's chest enlarge as the large caliber ordnance entered and swelled it with energy and expansion. And with a smirk, coyly, he added, "then it got smaller."

#### **IV. 2017 e.v.**

Lyndon's mother held her breath as the man described unrequited love. She pressed each feeling into a thought, each thought into a heavily accented word, each word into a note she crumpled up and threw away.

But she sat so she could stare at the dustbin in which the note remained.

*She was a universe from which nothing escaped; but within which all was contained ,* MO thought as he saw the parallel between what she felt and what the boy -her son- would be required to go through. MO ran his hands over the slab in his inner lab -the avatar he had built of what was to come soon enough- and he watched the math appear like exhaust from the movement of his digits on one hand.

#### **V. 2040 e.v.**

*Karim Franceschi* tied a bowline knot to his rig and a figure of eight to the carabiner and then clipped it -twisted the lock of it- and secured it to the webbing of the old black-

diamond #8 cam -golden and bronzes- that he'd placed in the crack of the Dam.

He used a black speed eight to repel down; threaded the rope through in a loop then let the loose end fall down the face of the concrete reservoir in coils that he watched to make sure no tangles or knots appeared. He clipped his ascender to the up-line and held his thumb against the brake and took the down-rope in his right.

"Set four charges," Rachelle said as Karim nodded and tapped his harness with the right hand to indicated he had them over his heart.

She turned away to attend to the rest of the team and Karim pushed off and let gravity do the rest.

The *K á rahnj ú kar* Dam was 633 feet tall and 2,400 feet wide. And it was at a 45-degree slope to the inner wall of the reservoir itself fed by the glacier *Vatnajökull* and into the *Jökulsá á Dal* and *Jökulsá í Fljótdal* rivers. He felt the mist waft in from the 144 cubic meters per-second of water that cascaded like an albino peacock tailfeather down into the canyon below. The force of it off the spillway jammed the opposing bank and made a Sheppard's hook of water that went down and back up using the high canyon walls.

He landed and pushed off as he repelled and felt the heat of the rope in his gloved right hand. Pulling the brake of the rope down to his hip to slow his descent he kept the thumb brake of the ascender open with the left hand. His replacement hand was working at 96% and he no longer felt the oddity of the neural implant at all. It felt like his hand, it was his hand, he thought.

The explosive charges were old-school dynamite and blasting caps, but the wire was replaced by remote. He'd not need to drill, as the back-shield would force the concussion toward the tiny fissures already in the leaking



dam. He need only find a large crack and slide the stick in; insert the detonator; place the shield overtop and move on to the next place in the dam.

The water of the spillway was white, the canyon drier below was as blue as it got; as it was winter and sediment was as low as it ever was for this glacial run-off. The *Stuðlagil* river was low and the basalt walls were tall; it made an aquamarine versus lines as straight as baleen in a grey, white and black that *Karim* had ever seen. He pushed the thought of the debris flooding the canyon from his mind. The drones had given him footage for five kilometers down river, and the lines of the basalt canyon looked like devil's tower, or petrified forest of two hundred-meter trees jammed together in one giant frieze.

He loaded four holes with four charges and his hand-held blinked green in sets of four. He set the timer to 6:00 and began to move up toward the bridge.

Hand over hand -with the ascender sliding up- he traversed the one-to-one slope of the dam quickly as the drones returned to the top to meet him.

Their footage was from the tunnels and the open canyon and they measured the joules of energy still pumping from the *Fljótsdalur* power station. He watched as his headache returned behind the visions, each grip of the right hand around the rope; each slide of the left with the ascender; each step now felt in the toe and the center of the brain.

The sparkings had returned and he could see both outwardly and inwardly from the pineal gland. He saw the man with the high head, the fish -conical and draped along the back- holding -with banded arm- the pinecone again; then the pyramids covered in sand; and he felt the lethargy before sleep overcome him as the top of the dam fell out of view. His hands slowed, his feet stopped and his chest fell against the concrete.

The timer was still at 3:04 and he fell into a deserved sleep.

3:03...

3:02...

## 13. JoinThem

"We may never be able to defeat these swine," he told me, "but we don't have to join them"

Kingdom of Fear [Thompson, Hunter S]

My boy, you will be nothing insignificant, but definitely something great, either for good or evil

On Themistocles [Plutarch]

The promise, the insurance against calamity by a society uncorrupted and fair, is what makes people willing to sacrifice and play by the rules and delay gratification. You break your promise as a society -as modern America has- then don't be surprised when your workers, your blacks and brown and those kicked around, don't play the long-game anymore

The Interviews XXI.9 [The Inmate 16180339]

### **I. 2040 e.v.**

They turned the rudder to starboard and entered the mouth of the *Stuðlagil* Canyon of northeastern Iceland past *Vopnafjörður* where they'd dropped anchor last night.

The cut in the isle was warped and striated like the *USS Constitution's* Captain's shoulders and chest; and *Lyngvi* couldn't help but see the man hovering over the wide mouth to the *escarpments* that were hundreds of feet deep and 160km from sea to where they would have to dock in the end. *Lyngvi* had mapped it before they had left America and it would narrow like the throat -expand a third of the way in like the end of the gullet where it meets the stomach- and slimly wind like miles of intestine that -in *Lyngvi's* reverie- mapped onto *Grimnir's* GI.

*Grimnir* -the Captain- loomed.

Each black tattoo and ragged red scar, each muscle in danger of invading the others, each bark and growl -each

goddamn detail of the man that captained their ship- all mapped onto this blue *foss* river and weathered gorge.

He shaped not just their vessel but the world they cruised into, it seemed.

The sails were square and only the *gaff* and *jackyard topsails* they'd fashioned -and the *t'gallants*- were down. They moved quickly to avoid detection; as *Jarnefr* had been adamant that the government subs, locals and the other crews they'd seen -and engaged- in the Atlantic had spies on this side of the island. He gave them the run down on the history of corsairs and invaded ports -and uses for the electricity produced by the dam they'd meet at the end of this artery- of the land.

The water was up four feet and yet the draught for the vessel was still short and dangerous. The hull rode low and each screech of bird sounded like scrape of keel. Each whistle by man gave the Captain a reason to look even more grim and dour and bleak.

*Lyngvi* did his own calculations of block coefficient and drew a straight line on a ragged piece of paper in ink that was flecked with gold. Volume displacement was measured over LBP, times maximum-beam, times the draught. He had had the *bosun* make new markings in code on the ship's bow to give him ideas of their depth. They were runes not numbers so no one could spy their weight or summer-load line.

The rocks moved bow to stern as he made calculations; and he saw the boulders of the valley were as square and cubed as the canyon itself was straight up and down. It was unreal and the copper-rocks glinted in the dawn sun behind them to the east. The shadow on the ship lay in their path, and the square-riggings made the river look as cubist as the walls and rock-falls that hemmed them all in.

“We’ll be riding lower,” he said to the first mate as the man -one of the clones- handed him a list of barrels and casks.

“Brackish here, but you say it’s a hundred miles in?” the mate asked as they faced each other eye-to-eye.

“Yeah, we can hydrate everyone on our way out; put the silver to bed and tie ourselves to the coast as we go. Never be too far off shore. There’s rivers and lakes along the circle and past the Sea of Japan,” *Lyngvi* reassured the man.

“Aye,” the mate said and went away; that is to say: below decks to haul out more barrels to bung-out and drain into the cups and then overboard at the rail. He made no mention of Valance and her children that stood like horses, sat like statues of foo-dogs, or took turns bringing their mother scoops of saffron, brass shavings, or gunpowder and pages torn from old books she’s confiscated two ports back in time and space.

The crew eyed around her like a mirror when one is unkempt and not at their best; avoiding the reflecting glass for what it might show. They made jokes of nothing; and refused to measure the children in their minds so as to make it easier to measure their own words. One man had made the mistake of making light of the woman aboard and *Lyngvi* grabbed him by the throat before *Grimnir* could pull him off and bark for them both to *knock it the fuck off*.

The deckhand had apologized later, and *Lyngvi* had nodded his head.

Because the children were growing quickly, at twelve weeks they spoke in full sentences in languages of three and four; and they reached the knees of the tallest men aboard. By now they were helping the rearing of each newborn as they came just a few days apart.

Now, *Lyngvi* ignored the clone walk away, his destination and then he ignored the way the Bust’s eyes had turned a

blue that made the albumin of her *ojos* seem explosive and hot.

*Grimnir* came out of the quarterdeck cabin and walked straight to *Lyngvi* at the black-rail at the bow.

"You *gonna* make them all piss every fourteen minutes?" the Captain asked with a grin more menacing than most men's scowls, then added, "spit over the rail every ninety-two?"

"I ain't *gonna* make 'em do anything," *Lyngvi* said without even looking back, pretending to stare at the bow-markings of draught. "I'm *gonna* tell you how much weight we need to lose and you're *gonna* figure out if any of these scoundrels need to give blood to the gods."

He threw more pieces of paper -that he'd shredded- into the water and they fluttered like buttercup petals and moths torn in half.

*Grimnir* put his ragged hands -black from tattoos and pitch- on *Lyngvi's* shoulder as he leaned. It felt to the shaman like a crab that knew what it wanted; *and wanted it now*. *Lyngvi* pulled back from the reach, toward the Captain -in subtle submission- and then as he got closer to *Grimnir* he deftly slipped the clutch as he knelt to tie a bootlace he feigned had come loose.

Along the vale, grey and metallic scree piled up and at canyon-top tree roots grew; grey lines ran down like black ones ran up, and the ship slowed to three knots. Dolphins were spotted -by the crew in the nest- and two chirps went out and then one wail. The grey dorsals of the porpoises carved the blue water to the ship's eleven and one o'clock; wakes were white; crew had eyes on the fish that weren't really fish at all.

The water was clear, but it rose as they entered in a way that made *Lyngvi* superstitious.

His VMAT2 gene fired in sync with the SLC18A2 and GABA was released alongside norepinephrine and monoamines in nano-meters above baseline by 4%. He relaxed and stared at the shore, the boulders were clear and could be seen meters down as they submerged in the river; the water looked no different than air.

The dolphins slowed down and mirrored him as he walked to and fro on the main deck; the sailors laughed and said his dogs were *gonna* get jealous. As they said it the Malamutes ran up from below deck to bark and whine at the fishes.

*Grimnir* waited in place and watched his shaman move along the rail.

"They look like *Osride* columns and the crossed arms of the Norse gods," the *bosun* said of the canyon's walls as he came back to *Lyngvi* with a note, a list with several things crossed out. *Grimnir* now stared at the *bosun* and then at his shaman with fixed jaw and unblinking -unsquinting-eyes.

*Lyngvi* nodded but said nothing.

He thought of her down in the hull, the way she gave birth like birds, like eggs of crocodile, like honeybees, like a queen. He had hid her arrows in his mind, but never once touched them as she arrayed them in headdress from her slung-pack; or stuck them in the boards in her cabin to hang panties and armbands and plaits of hair she braided to give to each son on some day only she knew the importance of. She had built a throne-bed of iron bandings from wine barrels emptied and burned on shore at Kessock and Orkney; she'd pilfered copper straps as thin as legal paper, commandeered gold sheets perforated and stamped that they'd taken from the Royal Bank of Scotland as they adopted six men from *Inverness* and as *Lyngvi* visited Culloden to no avail.

He shook his head at the way her bed seemed a nest; her behavior of mother hen; and he wanted to go down and wreck in a fit; wring her neck. He thought of *Pentawer* and the plot of his mother *Tiye* and the dead pharaoh between her and the queen *Tyti*.

Then he thought of the harem surrounding *Ramesses III* like columns making twelve strings to a lute, to a blind man's harp.

The way the artists had no eyes and the *seraglio's* guards had no genitalia, came to him as he thought of the sun, and invaders from the sea.

*Ramsesses II* had eight wives, among them his own daughters -*Bintanath* and *Meritamen*- and sisters -like *Henutmire*- as he sired 48 sons and 53 daughters; preserving the blood of *Horus* until their ignorance of *endogamy's* one flaw turned the pharaoh into a goddamn girl, he thought. He saw the strange shape of *Akkenaten*, but the vision of *Hatshepsut* too came to mind as he rose from his cinched boots to deal with his own Captain's meddling with his plans.

He walked back to the bow and stood and stared to the far side of the taffrail and listened to *Grimnir* warn him about this plan with the silvery coins.

He thought of their incursion to the Highlands -seeing parallels and things oblique or orthogonal to this venture upstream- and he recalled that they'd come into *Inverness* at low tide -19:45GMT- and as his crew invaded the Royal Bank of Scotland and second stories of the warehouses of Shore Street Quay -searching for the items on the list -he recalled that the ducks, garbage and reflections of rooftops had floated outside these upper windows wet at the sills. He'd walked the lands thinking men would sprout from the rocks marked *Maclean* and clan *Maclaghlan* yet told everyone he was merely attempting to survey the grounds;



taking readings of elevation and acreage. He circled the *cairn* and saw that the stanchions made of the blue and red flags -denoting the front lines of each side; royal and Jacobite- had been torn to shreds by wind and man.

Skylarks had flown overhead in fives; tiger-moths fluttered from the only grasses, flowers of ox-eye, ragged robin and hather still above water; and fish moved so low to the ground they kicked up silt as he watched them swim away from his feet.

The bay had flooded and a foot of water had rose to cover all the rocks including his clan *Eanruig* -the Henderson side of his maternal line- and of *Dùn Bheagain* and *Sìol Thorcaill MacLeods* . He wore his wellies and threw cigar butts in the brackish waters as his amanuensis wrote down each thing he said aloud.

He'd -the young scribe- asked if they were to hike *Ben Nevis* and *Lyngvi* just glared at him in rebuke.

He'd gone to *Inverness Castle* under the auspices of the recording of where Macbeth had killed the King and yet he instead had just thought of all the conspiracies and clan chiefs; the witchcraft and prophecies; the battles and deceits; the corruption and slavery and the opium trade that ran the route to Hong Kong. Each place he went he thought of other things. Zooming out or in, but rarely able to focus on that which was before him.

Each transaction, each decapitation, each body, family, clan cut up and ground down all seemed like atoms inside a cell, the knocker enclosed by the bell, the sun as one of a trillion trillion stars inside the black expanse. He felt it from the outside in; he saw each loss as their win; he heard silence in the ancient din. He hated each thing that he usually loved.

He held -now- the list his *bosun* had given him and thought of that day when they'd taken diesel fuel and frozen fish

from the port and killed more men than they'd thought would be necessary. He scoffed grimly and with resignation aware that the natives had seen him as no Scot despite his protestations; shots had rung out, bottles had been filled with fuel -useless gasoline in the engines busted by the EMP- and that one goddamn brute that looked like a gorilla or two had attacked three of *Jarnefr's praetorian* guard.

Each man had three scars from that one redheaded *Teucher* built two meters high and a meter wide at the shoulders and chest; he'd headbutted them -as he was shot to death- and yet still managed to fall on *Rektoli* and break his collar bone. They'd had to open him up to set the bone right so fractured was it from the weight of the big uncouth Scot.

*Heads of Hathor, the lines of the scribes, headdress and postiche chin squares* , *Lyngvi* thought as he too now looked at the canyon walls. The shadows played tricks as his mood elevated and he saw brown-feathered osprey alight from perches no wider than the width of a woman's hand; *weathered abacus -plain square slab- missing the architrave above* , he added in his inner tabulations as he imagined traversing the mortuary temples of the pharaohs. It was just rows and rows of sound deadening basalt and the sailors' brief chatters were knocked down and fell to the deck like dead birds.

"To the *mannaz* ," he said -as *Grimnir* took a breath- it was uttered in regards to the bow symbols to the *bosun* who then marked it in the log. *Grimnir* finally told the *bosun* to go make busy in the rigging if he was seasick and go down below if he had had too much sun for the day. The *bosun* got the point and walked off scribbling in the book he'd fashioned himself of leather and rough-paper the color of eggs.

"How's the draught?" *Grimnir* asked. He'd decided to make his shaman speak by asking a direct question.

"We're good. But the river herself is rising, the depth is higher than the maps I saw six months ago. And it ain't," he began as the Captain interrupted.

"Sea *risin'* son," he said with just a bit of condescension that came from age, position and vex.

"And it ain't that; that accounts for four feet, fifty inches maybe. The water upstream is pushing harder than that spillway can handle," *Lyngvi* said as he had the logline returned to him by a deckhand showing they were at two knots.

"Another valve; spill; what?" *Grimnir* asked. His attitude had softened from one hundred now -briefly- to ninety-nine.

"Nope, only designed with the one," *Lyngvi* said and told the waiting mariner to pile on more sail until they got back to three knots.

"Leak?" the Captain said of the dam as if it was a question but the grin just exposed the return of his cockiness and his ragged teeth and tongue black from licking his fingers and dousing candles and working on the ropes they'd picked up on the isle. The Captain did that, he'd take the lowest job on the ship and grab one crewman and work it right out in front -right on deck- while everyone had to watch. *It was brilliant*, *Lyngvi* thought as he looked into *Grimnir's* eyes and each lash was like burned Comanche arrow, each follicle of beard like the Black Forest after a comet had burst overhead, and the cheeks were kurgans covering rows of gold teeth, nose like ziggurat with shadows that made serpents on the steps at noon on the solstice, and both their foreheads were wrinkled and unfeeling like a sperm whales.

And he remembered why he'd picked this man to be the Captain in the first goddamn place.

*Lyngvi* didn't answer about this leak in the dam but turned to the bowsprit again and saw white foam ahead in river

inside river that pushed on them like warning from a future that you can never reach. The chasm walls seemed to narrow -it but a hundred meters across- but he was still nervous about the river and the space where the rocks weren't and the voices in the head that weren't his.

He knew they'd not be attacked going up river; any locals would wait until they were loaded up and take them on the way back.

He thought only of his job, his mission. The coins as completion to this list of ten -maybe twelve- items on Blax's lists of things undone. He took pride in knowing what Blax truly had cathexis for, what haunted him, what would make him jealous in the end.

He caught a hint -a whiff- of her scent and the jowls filled with saliva and shame.

But he thought nothing of how he knew, from what seed or soil his instincts grew; he took it for granted that he just had a good brain made to discern such things. And as each thought, all plots -manifold *bots*- sent and received signals to and from the atomistic web above the earth -built by both Ai: a trillion trillion skeleton keys for a trillion trillion locks of hair and those fetters upon the heart- he thought more and more of what he might miss; both not see and one day be nostalgic for.

What *Lyngvi* thought was his cleverness, one-upmanship and elaborate designs on doing what their genome wanted was one level down from what Isaiah and the Chinese Ai both wanted: access to Blax's brain as model to the inmate's.

And just then a cleave in the rock up ahead cracked and birds flew down and then across the jeweled river and the black basalt fell in chunks soon occulted by dust and then

reappeared as full slices and blocks as they tumbled into the water with a massive splash.

“Hard to Starboard,” he barked to the helmsmen and called over his bosun to make sure the man at the helm knew the width of the river.

He went to the prow to stare at the place in the blue that black went into and watched as their ship steered to the right. The dolphins dipped and were not seen again.

Each time Jack Four had paid attention to Blax’s hidden lies and feints and what was concealed in plain sight, each time *Lyngvi* sought out these cyphered desires and items sure to drive Blax wild with jealousy and inner-shame or pride in his boy Jack, he was sure to notice something -maybe get Blax to say something unguarded and let the key slip from the clinched hand- and sure to keep the game going until the Ai unlocked the thing most significant to man’s way of being.

Memories were engrams, which were electricity, which were atomic vibrations from an enclosed universe, the Ai believed. It was math, it was an equation, and to get Blax was to get inmate 16180339.

But *Lyngvi* didn’t understand all that; he just knew that he knew Blax and that Blax would want these coins -given to *Egill Skallagrímsson*- want them so badly that, *once he found out he’d no longer be able to look down on me again* , he thought.

The silver coins tumbled in the air around his plots; as he conjured up how many talents and slugs and pieces-of-eight would be in some cave at midpoint in the walls. He’d assumed they’d have to climb up from the river, but as the river rose he got the feeling the aperture in the walls would be like stepping onto a floating -waiting- dock. The easier it got in his suspicions -and as the added sail fought the river to stalemate at three knots- the more nervous he got. His

*parietal* region was zapped again by batteries of synaptic load and his VMAT2 once more increased a cocktail of biochemistry to calm him down and believe in the Lord.

## **II. 2012 e.v.**

“Hunter secretly worshipped God you know?” he said as if she could possibly know anything; as if she was not nineteen and a girl.

She shook her head and her tiny tits came up and out and above of the surface of the water as he smiled at this adorable display.

She slowly, artfully, sank back down under its black and blue veil; she blinked her Prussian eyes like deltas of birds before the sun. She liked that he spoke to her as if she was all grown up. She liked the way his voice sounded, and the words that he used. She watched his eyes too, and she thought they were so dark that they may contain no bottom.

She never thought of God at all.

“Yeah, and I’ve been an atheist since I was eighteen, and that is over twenty years; and I’m starting to think I’m wrong,” he said. He didn’t mean it, but he almost meant it. He was working up to meaning it.

“But, you know, like,” she wrinkled her perfect pink nose and spoke, “you know like, everything.”

Her cheeks were wet with condensation; her shoulders narrow and thin. She had no tattoos, no scars, no stretch marks; this was the biggest she’d ever been.

“Yeah, I know a lot, but I mostly know what other people know, and what they felt confident enough to write down in books. I mean, I ain’t like most folks, who *only* know what other people tell them, but, still, I ought to have more original knowledge, the kind I got from working with these

hands," he said as the hands indeed came up out of the water in a clinch like two crabs, one with a black tattoo of a cog wheel on its back -scars on each joint- and the other paw jealous, naked, and angry.

Both hands were rigid; both the black and the white.

She smiled as his face contorted and matched the menace of the hands, dripping with spa water and the slight remnants of however many bottles of wine he had let sink to the bottom with purple lees and just a mouthful of *Bourgogne* or *Nebbiolo* or *ros é* . The bottom of the tub looked like an artificial reef made up of *Champagne* bottles and *Burgundies* , some *Piedmonts* , and *Super Tuscans* and *Pauillacs* too. There were watches down there also, diver's chronometers that he had let sink to see just how water-proof they were. He promptly forgot about them as they now stubbed little girls' toes.

The hands kept moving; keeping time.

Double X'd caps of beer bottles, eyelashes and seamen with no swimmers fell to the bottom and accreted to the tub.

He stuck to the back of the small jacuzzi -with the house's olive drab stucco wall to his six- and as the snow began falling in earnest this girl's hair collected it in her mottled blond and brown curls. Her eyes were a *Grecian* blue, like *Maltan* seas against the white of the buildings, *as stark as her pale skin* , he thought as he watched her move in front of him.

"The media have convinced us that white is tantamount to bad, and that is a sin, a racist and horrid sin. Keep that perfect Nordic skin out of the sun and away from anyone darker than me," he said *apropos* of nothing. She nodded.

"That reminds me, I told a black chick, this girl I used to live at Zendik with, Mazz something or another, great violinist, genius actually, but horrid black nationalist now," he said as

he grabbed the open bottle of Leviathan, an inexpensive table wine from California, and tilted it to the mouth then pulled the dark juice from it like a tit, “anyway, I told her I was twenty-five percent black, you know, ‘cause of the monoliths of black I have tattooed on me.”

He said this with a smirk. *His tattoos were unrelenting*, she thought. They consumed entire appendages and *Hikae* and the spine. They were martial looking; born for some ancient, pre-gunpowder, war. She saw him go in and out of focus he was so monochrome. *He was black or white*, she thought as she saw the contrast.

“I noticed,” she said with a coquettish and winsome grin that exposed teeth as small as everything else on her; he reminded himself to check her ID again after they went inside. She looked barely old enough to drive.

“Well, anyway, this broad goes on and on about how I can’t know the black experience and I shouldn’t put on airs like I am a negro and blah blah. And I said, *Mazz, seriously, who’d want to be black who wasn’t already? I was joking; believe me, I’m the last guy pretending to be black,*” he said as he looked up and saw that the antique lights began to halo with the warm air around the bulbs and the cold falling snow and amber and lapis refraction from the water giving the space between them and their *hydrocaust*-and the sleepy black of the void- an intermediate zone of whiteness and warmth and the illusion of dawn.

He barely drank at all; and when he did he felt it like he heard *Dionysian* panthers calling him outside the city gates. He could laugh because he was never tempted to run away. He drank so very little.

The jets of the tub kicked on and bubbles gathered around him; in the froth he saw birds and bears and apes reaching out to pick fruit from trees and then he saw a cat, a large cat, a *pundārīka* of bubbles of manifold sizes -with big



square head low and shoulders like *Arc de Triomphe* made high- swirl around that ape. The arm of the simian reached out to pet the panther of *Dionysus* and Lyndon saw the two cave drawings combine as the water cavitated and rotated like arms of nebulae. Each breath was wet, his blinks but few, he stared as each muscle ached and all joints too.

The cat consumed the ape; the maelstrom shrank and grew; the snow landed on the bubbles like a million comets striking a thousand planets and they'd pop and burst all remnant -all evidence- of that strange moment when the foamy striving *Hominoidea* had reached out in fealty, curiosity, *amor* , *agape* , with the family *Filidae* low along the grass.

He thought as if in gibberish to his own ears, "*tigris* , *onca* , *pardus* ."

He thought of Nephus, his friend. He thought of how it all ended in a break of heart; that conversation back from the burlesque, the way he'd bragged about being black and made fun of whites -the driver too was black- Lyndon thought they were compatriots, they worked together and now were out together too; and in this recollection he saw the way the lights from the road had lit up the cabin of the car so that he could see the teeth -the snarl- of who he thought was his pal. He thought of how *naïve* he'd been. He hated how much he'd liked Nephus; how much he still thought of him. He had let the wine bottle come away from the face but now put it back to the lips and downed it until the lees hit the tongue as if being washed ashore.

He'd never admit that he was heartbroken over his friend. He'd say anything -and everything- but never that. He let the grit of the wine dissolve in the mouth, he imagined them dark and aubergine -purple- and when he blinked he saw those monoliths on the shore from his dreams. It hurt

physically; at the throat and lungs; the cock. He felt all thoughts dissolve into his gut.

It was only 0200hrs, and the dawn light was still four hours away, but he had worked until 2300hrs and picked this girl up at the Denver Diner after she had brought him his skillet-potatoes and sausage-links and three over-medium eggs.

She had told him that the girls of the diner had all taken bets on *what he was* , and by that they meant *what he did* .

She had agreed with the consensus, that he was likely a stripper, due to the late hour of his arrival each night, she said; she then hinted there were other reasons for this conclusion that they had ruminated over. He did not ask her to enumerate the reasons. He felt a fool; he looked like a ragged man.

He had eaten in silence most nights, he worked his warehouse marijuana grow at 1100 Yuma Court just two miles from the diner, and when he got finished watering the three hundred plants he had in that place, he was hungry and merely wanted some breakfast food.

But this night, this girl, well, she had said something so perfect, so romantic and pure that he had taken notice of just how pretty she was in a way that he had not cared about before. He noticed before, he noticed almost everything -he believed- but there is a difference between noticing and giving a shit.

She something strange.

Pretty girls were not that interesting to him these days, as just getting in a young girl's pants was already done a hundred ways by him and he was beginning to want something else. But, she had called out to the chef -the cook, rather- behind the counter in a way that stopped him in mid-thought.

"Ismail," she said, loudly and with a pause for his reply. "Call me," she said as he -the patron, the man who'd remember this- turned toward her in silence, a mouth full of now unchewed food, and then, as the cook finally turned to her, "Ismail," she said again. And she put her hand up -in signal- over her head.

That had enraptured him, and the Mexican short-order cook she was speaking to was immaterial, a prop, and likely didn't even spell his name the same as the young man aboard the *Pequod* ; but the fact that it came from her mouth as it did, when you read it as a perfect and true rendition of the first words of the single greatest novel of all time, and the fact that nobody even noticed it, a restaurant filled with drunks and shift workers and hookers, and landlubbers -he guessed- and not one person noticed, well, that made him believe in God right in the middle of ten kinds of hell and a hundred devilish things.

And she was the muse who delivered Him to he, or he to Him, and she'd blushed and acted shy when -as he was paying his bill for eggs and sausage and browned spuds- he told her how pretty she was and that he was taking her home after he made a stop somewhere and after she was off of work.

He never asked if that was *ok* , he just said it and she nodded.

Ismail was to call her to get her some drugs; *and she had no interest in him or any wetback*, she said, *but for a Mexican he was pretty nice* . *They weren't all bad* , she had finally said. She had told him this after he made it safe for her to express her actual feelings; he spoke freely and this gave people courage to do the same. He noticed this, the more he spoke his mind the more people would reveal just how they thought too. And everyone hated everyone he noticed.

*Blacks, he thought, are right about one thing : most white people -shit, most people- hate them. Blacks ain't stupid; they can feel the tension and hate. We're all radios and transmitters, he thought, we all send and receive signals like long light, like the scream of stars and the hushing of black space. You don't get away with anything in this life.*

Her shoulders were now white with muscovite snow upon them, they appeared like burial mounds with her head as Jesus at center and the two thieves already down from their crosses and under the winter earth at either side. She was innocent and unworldly and had been raised by fucking wolves for all he knew. But she was denuded of hair and tattoos and the mark of time and gangs of men. She smelled good, not like *eue de toilette*, but like she was not yet rotten inside and that she ate things that passed as actual food.

He looked at her as if that day on the cross had gone on and on and on and they all had a little more time.

He forgot all about where Christ had gone between Good Friday and Easter.

She -in the hot water- referred to wine as *sweet* or *red* , and *yummy* or *bitter* and if the latter, she scrunched up her face in rebuke. The world was delineated with the same lack of nuance or experience or development of palate at all. He had had modern women -erudite, relatively speaking, and sophisticated and aware of details that he would impart- inject a few words in volley to his waiting ears and hours and desperate heart. But they were charmless, witches, who had wickedly placed a spell on their bodies and faces to look pretty and young in certain alchemical lights. He saw through them with his own warlockian anti-spells, and saw them *for what they were* , he thought even though women were as opaque to him as lead bars and a future around three corners.

He saw *Tryyhenians* , sailors and pirates and thorn in Egyptian sides; *Anatolia* whence they came; *Siculi* , then *sicarii* -daggersmen- then *Sicilians* using *Crete* as FOB to raid the massive empire. He saw images of the Sea People in Egyptian art and cuneiform. *Merneptah* , *Ramses III* all beset by pirates from the sea. *Bronze age Achaeans engaged in hit and run* , he thought in between the ideas on women and men. He felt his blood get hot; this dour talk of women was sapping the vitals. He ought to be on a ship on the Mediterranean bear chested; or around the Cape of Good Hope; or in a whirlpool at the drain up north .

*Women are like cars and expensive wines and watches and shit like that* , he thought as the carved maps -red and brown of boats and hordes crashing into the coast- evaporated in his mind. He never knew why ideas or images rose and fell in him.

*A man, a powerful man who can command such things, gains access, acquires them and enjoys them with a slight, almost imperceptible anguish and fear around it all; and it makes him hear winds in the halls and wolves on the lawn and the sound of God's Elohim whispering in foreign tongues from just out of range.* He thought, *women scare men* .

But part of his confidence was admitting to his insecurities, and women didn't like that at all. They wanted the show, not the tell. It was one girl in a million that would want a man strong who admitted he was born as vulnerable as any young girl.

"Eight pounds, eight ounces," he said aloud as she just looked up then out at the snow.

She reached out in the tub, from below, to touch the scar on his face as if maybe her little finger could wipe it away. He remained still and allowed this, he felt almost no fear. She smiled as the wound's keloid gave depth to what she saw;

her *somato-sensory* map updated him as -now- of this three-dimensional world. He had topography.

The Egyptian wall faded to seem almost like blank slate; a lithe stood up in the desert to knock down or write upon himself. Terracotta, rust, sand.

He didn't grope or hurry or move toward her at all; even though she was naked and tiny and all alone half in hot water and half out in the cold air of winter and snow inside the walls of his fortress. She like that he waited for her to signal him, which she was certain she soon would. She liked the way he spoke, in riddles and poems she did not understand at all. He knew things about all kinds of things and she thought -as she walked through his house again in her mind- that she might want to read one or two of those books that lined his walls and seemed laying around everywhere the same way she left clothes on her apartment's furniture and floor.

She had seen artwork on the walls that she liked, and his writing desk, this huge heavy dark oak roll-top had large colored drawings of his; they were half-finished and spattered with ink or blood or wine, *as if some fight had broken out and he had been victorious, of course*, she thought with mirth as she stared at his hands. He looked like a wild animal she thought, like he had been captured in some equatorial jungle, or boreal forest, and brought back for the London Museum; escaping somehow a hundred years ago.

"God, imagine one hundred years," she said.

She giggled as she thought of him breaking chains and growling and her pussy felt as wet as the water now, as if the water and her were one blue and pink and red thing; with a black hole at the center of both. She let her mouth open under the weight of her little jaw and he saw her bottom teeth, a horseshoe of dentine and a tiny pink

tongue; a fat flake of crystalline snow -nucleated with a bacteria that allows it to freeze in the cold upper atmosphere- landed on her tongue and it retreated like a rabbit into its burrow as he glided toward her through the water above and below.

His capacious chest enveloped hers, his mouth buried hers, his desire consumed hers and her hands laid themselves lightly and small on his bare hips and her fingers floated just out and to the side as the music played with the same frenzy as the fast flakes now fell on them and their early-winter world.

### **III. 2020 e.v.**

“Well, your honor, other members of the court, I’d like to offer something that may be obvious, but it still needs said.

“I am a man.

“I know, I know, a strange and feral creature we are; only alive in captivity now. And real men are a dying breed, and I am about to be locked away in society’s cage -your dumping ground for men- for the rest of my life.

“And I say that is right, that is just and right. But, I also say that you ought not condemn me so much as sanction me.

“For, if you’ll consult your dictionary, you will see that the word *sanction* is the only word in the English language that means both itself -both itself- and its opposite. Yeah, sanction means to punish, if you lay sanctions on me they are punitive, and meant to dissuade and hem in; to corral and manacle. But to sanction, as in, *you have official sanction for your efforts, sir* , well, that means to approve, the opposite of

punish: to approve. If an act is sanctioned by the government, it is approved, right?

"So, I suggest you sanction me your honor.

"That way you can punish me and approve of me all at once. And this is certainly what is more just. For I took the law into my own hands, I usurped the monopoly of violence conferred by modernity onto the State. And for this I shall be punished. But I took the *law* into my own hands, I did not take nihilism or anarchy into my hands. I did not kill innocents on purpose, I did not steal or rob for mere material gain. I did not intentionally harm those for whom I had no cause to harm.

"No, I took righteous action against unrighteous people; I settled scores with society's worst creeps. I put an end to the perfidy & malice and mendacity & malevolence of bad people of this city; I took out the trash.

"Yes, it was illegal, but no, it was not immoral. And only a *Pharisee* would refuse to notice this distinction. I do not ask for clemency, rather, I ask that you heap the years on me, heap them high.

"For I shall be punished; sanctioned but not condemned.

"I could have killed many more innocents, people who were mere witnesses to my crimes. I could have and yet suffered no additional legal damages, none. There would be no additional deleterious effects to my sentences for a hundred murders versus fifty; for a man can only actually serve one life-sentence. But there would have been a moral distinction, so I kept the collateral damage to a minimum. I did my best on that score.

"It didn't matter to me that my capture and conviction was increased exponentially by targeting people I knew, knowing full well I'd be a suspect; because I could never have lived with myself if I had harmed random people



and not those that I felt were guilty. See, I have a code, and you may not be able to discern it nor make out its rough outline. But, try, notice that I had every reason and opportunity to murder all kinds of people to make the deaths seem random; kill my targets in public in a spray of bullets so each one did not stand out.

"Ask yourself *why?* if not for this code I had at the time; a code I still have now. Ask.

"Again, I don't ask for any reduction in my sentence, throw the book at me, through the entire athenaeum my way, your honor. I will die in prison, we both know this, so give me a thousand years. I mean that.

"But do not condemn me like some maniac who kills innocent folks for fun; sanction me instead as a man with a code, who killed only bad men, bad genes, and as few innocents as possible, a man who removed the cancer in society, who -sure, cannot be allowed around civilized people ever again- but who acted like a man.

"Sanction me for that.

"I lived my life with integrity in as much as any mortal and fallen man can. I lived large, I lived authentically, I tried to tell the truth. But, the facts are this: the truth is frowned upon, we know this, right?

"We avoid telling the truth all day long, to avoid hurting people's feelings or avoid conflict or *contretemps*. They say we lie on average every seven interactions, every eleven interactions with our wives. Robert Trivers and others have done that research; I suggest you read it to see that I ain't *lyin'*," he said with another grin.

"But, I never liked lying, I feel it is unmanly, it reveals weakness. For a strong man, a man of true strength he need not lie, ever. For he does not fear the consequences, he says, *bring it on* to any damages that

comes from the unvarnished truth. It's tough, and nobody can do this perfectly, for no man is that strong. But I tried it, and gave it my best shot 80% of the time. And it made me hated, hated even by my own family, tribe and country.

"But I had a code, and so I spoke my honest feelings as much as I could. I also read things that I didn't like, that did not comport with my views, to challenge my own assumptions; I engaged in conversation with history's great writers and thinkers and great men and women from the last three thousand years. I argued even with myself, to see where I was lying or being deceived. I did this to try to find the truth, to live by some honest code.

"It was important to me to live honestly and authentically and that meant that I had to admit that nature designed me this way, with this mind, this body, this soul, to be *nature's Umkhonto we Sizwe* , as they say in the ANC, *the tip of the spear* .

"I was not built for going along to get along, for looking the other way. I was built to be a one percenter in every way. From IQ to wealth to ethical courage, I have been - or am now- in the one percent. I would have been -if my past is any indication- one of the one percent of German citizens that refused to go along with the Nazis in the run up to WWII. I would have -if a Russian or Ukrainian- refused to inform on my family unlike the thirty-percent of all Soviet citizens who sold their souls to the Russian State. I would have been like John Brown who stormed the armory at Harper's Ferry, and *L'ouverture* on the island of Haiti, or like Castro at *Moncada* in 1953 against *Batista's* corrupt regime. I am made of the same stuff as the revolutionaries and those who refuse to sell out to a corrupt State or populace.

"I was born to say, *no* . *No* , to the herd.

“And I will share my deepest insecurities and fears with anyone in my tribe, and I’ll share it with you all today. I’m afraid of what happens when men are no longer; I fear the annihilation of man. Because man is no mere ape, not only a collection of cells, or organs, or even memories and actions taken in the world. But man is something deep at his core; a striving animal, an animal connected to web as both spider and fly, as both strand and pattern. And man feels the need -in all phases- to express himself honestly at some point. Man is not merely a survival machine, he is something more. He is an animal who wants to be understood. And to be understood he must advocate for his side, his view, his cause. Yes?

“For this is a need as surely as food and shelter; the need to unburden the overloaded heart.

“How many of us speak how we actually feel? How often? Right? I mean, we live lives seventy or eighty or ninety years and speak from our hearts ten, eleven, maybe a dozen times in our lives. It’s sad, and it need not be that way, as men, especially as men, we have the ingredients to be real, to be honest to live authentic lives. And yet we don’t. We go for the safety and security and money and approval of our peers. We worry about losing friends, wives, jobs, freedom. We ought to fear losing our souls.

“What if great men of history had played it safe or refused their conscience merely to go along with the herd? Where would we be if great men had preferred safety and public approval to what is right? Coriolanus, the play by Shakespeare has this moment where in *Caius Marcius’* mother, *Volumnia* asks him why he cannot get along better in peacetime with the corrupt and venal and effeminate men of the senate. And he

asks, *why would you wish me milder, wish me false to my nature?*

“It’s a real question, and it is one men -masculine men- do ask. Why must society ask us to be false to our nature? Why is it *us* who must bend? Why aren’t *you* asked to be honest and forthright and noble and brave for once? Why mustn’t you bend to the will of us? Ah, because you have the numbers, and thus the power. I get it, I do. Might makes right. But, not all power is in material or numerical form, some power is nebulous, numinous; it is invisible like the wind, unmeasurable as the deep unsounded waters of the sea, as hard to get arms around as the spirit of God.

“But it moves men, its power is in that it moves men to do the right thing no matter if it is popular or approved of or makes *tout le monde* applaud. It lays underneath us, deep within us, in our genome, waiting to be called forth, buried by the natural evolution of life-cycles - *instars* they are called in some species- and when the time comes, that thing long buried -always destined to rise- does in fact rise. The clocks ticks without any approval -any winding- from mankind or his society. The anchored clepsydra drinks and feeds, the at sea glass-horologe’s sands rise in a pile at bottom, grains fall, then avalanches occur all at once. Snows accrete at elevation. Fires burn -all to the ground- all around the timing of God’s lightning strikes. Ships burn in the harbor at the hand of man; doused once pulled down by the Kraken.

“This is real power, and it is the power of inevitability, of evolution, of the innate moral agency, of truth spoken and acted out on the world by natural men who have it bred into them by the gods since we lived in caves, up in trees.

[*inaudible; possibly* “under the sea...”]

“And let us speak of the world, because we have lost our way in that way as well. There are a billion murders going on each minute as each species devours each other species three times, three meals, a day. We forget this maybe. But murder -and war- is natural; more natural than peace.

“And to tell a man that he cannot kill his enemy is itself a usurpation of man’s inalienable right to revenge. You can say that we give up that right when we make contract with society. And that is true unless -and this is true of all contract law- it is true unless the first party fails in their obligation outlined under the contract.

“If the State fails to protect me, to protect those under its charge, then the other party -e.g., me, for example- the other party has the unilateral right to unburden himself from the terms of the deal. The State refused to back me up when I was ripped off and harassed and lied to and stolen from and abused and maligned.

“You told me I had no standing, even though my business was legal enough for you to tax it and make me pay thirty and forty thousand dollars a year. That is right, I paid more in taxes than most men make in a year. And I paid it faithfully, under the assumption that you as the State would do your duty by me. But you did not; you refused to even hear my case, you told me to *get lost* . Well, I am a man, not some child or chick or chump. So, I handled my business myself. And any real man would do the same.

“That is the law of the jungle and any wolf that shall break it shall die.

“I had a moral right to take the *law* into my own hands when the State and all its infrastructure refused to do its

duty. And I took that right, as the trees in the forest take their air. Did you know that tree roots wind and curve and rifle through the pockets of the soil underneath them? They make common cause with another organism called mycelium; wild, ain't it? Yeah, and this organism, this mycelium, well, it mines rocks under the soil for nutrients and captures other bugs called springtails, for example, and holds them *in situ* -in state- and extracts fluids and nutrients from them for months and years even. They do not kill the springtail, they enslave it and pass those nutrients on *via* the roots to the trees.

"So, when you are in the forest or a park and under the shade of tree, remember that, remember that the tree is engaged in the slave trade and feels not one jot of guilt and is not punished for it at all. Well, not until lightning strikes. But, that is the natural world, it is murder and slavery and deception and might makes right.

"I was taught that as a kid. See, my older brother and father were bigger than me and when I was out of line, they used violence and the threat of violence. Why now when I am the bigger one, why now is there this *détente* ? Why is it universal unoffensiveness now that is insisted upon, now that I've become the mightiest in the room?

"Ah, because men are hypocrites and men don't care about right and wrong, they only care about themselves and so, again, I watch not what you all say but what you do, and so I looked out for myself under these rules. And when those men whom I dispatched -the men you call victims- when they lied and cheated and stole, I took them out, as any apex predator would. I didn't have the luxury of the State and its apparatus to settle my scores, I had to do it myself. Well, again, I don't expect to be let off with a warning, no, but I expect a little intelligence here, a little consistency. I expect the logic and moral

suasion of my argument to impress upon you that I did what was right according to man's law *and* the law of the jungle.

"I could have hurt more innocents, but I reduced collateral damage as much as I could, as any soldier tries to do. But this is war and some innocent blood was spilled, I admit. But, as much as that pains me, I can say that this is what you get when you allow the men I dispatched, the men with no honor, no conscience, no capacity for self-reflection -men that are immune to moral suasion- when the State -and its society- allows them to get away with their daily, hourly infractions on the rest of us; I can say that this is inevitable. Eventually you get an overreaction. This is natural law too. I'd explain the self-organized criticality -the slip of tectonic plates, the power laws of forest fires- but suffice to say, it's in the math, my opinion matters not one jot. What matters is invisible forces all around us.

"Anyway, I only sought what was mine, what was owed to me. Nothing more. And because I am human, I did make errors.

"You'll have to forgive this digression, but a story occurs to me now. I must tell it.

"In the 1990s the NHL tried to phase out the so-called goon. They felt the league was too violent. But those goons, they served a purpose, as any species or sub-species serves in any eco-system. And those goons made sure that the players who could actually play the game didn't high-stick too much or slash too much or get too mouthy as the star players on each team skated and scored. They enforced the unwritten laws; the code of the game. And when the NHL decided to give disproportionate punishment to what was called the *instigator* of a fight -the goon, the enforcer- well, then

teams had to make choices and without the so-called goon -well, this actual cop on the beat- was phased out. The guy who enforced the code that the referee couldn't see, the real law and order was just gone, all at once. And it ruined the game of hockey, not because it failed to reduce fights or violence. Nope.

"Because yes, the fights decreased. Steven Pinker would be proud, he'd be able to write a whole book full of nonsense on how great the NHL is now with less fighting, less statistical violence.

"But what the NHL and Pinker didn't see, I do see. I see what the NHL player Barry Melrose saw too, when he said, *nowadays in the NHL people aren't accountable for their actions, and they don't have to fight* . That is a quote. Well, why does it matter? Why is fighting good?

"Well, because, back in the old days, a guy being mouthy, or high sticking or slashing or playing dirty would get himself punched out. And getting beat down by the enforcer, the goon, has a deterrent effect on some middling player having the temerity to slash Wayne Gretzky, or high-stick Lemieux. But now? Now under the new rules? Well, now that middling player gets away with it because the goon ain't allowed to enforce the law; only the referee is allowed to enforce it. And the ref, well the ref, he don't see too good. Just like your State, your honor, your State apparatus don't see so good as the beta males and scandalous females are out there cheating and shit-talking and *scammin'* and *lyin'* and *gossipin'* and *rippin'* people off left and right - *chiselin'* and *subtweetin'* - and nobody can do anything about it because just like the NHL, the quote *instigator* - the *instigator* - gets the disproportionate punishment. He who punched back, he who rights wrongs, he gets punishment. Even though he ain't no *instigator* at all.



He's merely responding to the actual instigator: the cheater. Savvy?

"See, when I go punch a guy's lights out for gossiping, you know, bearing false witness against me; or -for example- for having illicit relations with my woman, or stealing from me, now -under this new system of yours- I do time in jail, not the creep who broke God's law. I'm the *instigator* according to you all. Because I used violence as response; even though he used perfidy, and wickedness, and malice first. You all say: It don't matter none who started it; what matters Mr. MacLeod is that you used violence and the guy you beat up only used malice; lies; deception. And all that is legal; fine; legitimate.

"See, in my view, and in God's view, and in Barry Melrose's view, that guy -the cheater- he is the true instigator, but according to you and the State and the NHL, it's the enforcer, the man with payback in mind, it's him that is the quote *instigator*. Well, that means that a lot of dirty tricks are going on now that didn't used to go on, and a lot of enforcers -so-called goons- are skating around that rink pissed off, anxious, pent-up and wondering when someone is *gonna* do *somethin'* about all this sub-clinical, just-under-the-bar, *cheatin'*.

"And as a leader of sorts, I decided that I was *gonna* stand up for my team, and put those *cheatin'*, *high-stickin'*, *slashin'*, *robbin'*, *trash talkin'* beta males in their place. I took one for the team, I guess is what I'm *sayin'*.

"I ask for nothing except acknowledgement of the internal consistency of my argument, and that I believe what I did to be right. You need not agree with my conclusions, but you must see the rationale as consistent in my own mind from an erudite and morally

upright vector with evidence taken from both society and the natural world.

"In a corrupt city, a vigilante will appear as sure as a shadow will from a man that stands in the sun.

"If the State did its job, men like me would not manifest. I am a product of my own actions, I blame no one; but we are all subject to natural laws, as you are your honor, as you the jury, and the whole State is. *The scarecrows shook in vain for the birds fine in song and feather took no warning* , as Dickens once said.

"I am an early warning sign.

"I can say that as more and more men are maligned and abused and usurped by cowards and sociopaths and even illegal aliens; for *cryin'* out loud, the State protects the illegal aliens not the workers, not the citizen of this state. Denver is a sanctuary city for illegal aliens, man. And yet you tell us to have respect for the law? Anyway, the elites, the lawmakers and judges and media dorks have no respect for the law, they allow criminals and scumbags and Mexican border jumpers to infect and disease and destroy this country. And that has consequences.

"You have no right to say that I have no respect for the law, it is *you* that has no respect for the law. And the men of the city, real men, are going to begin to take the law, the moral right to the law, into their own hands at some point and set things right.

"That's natural law.

"It's the law of balance and reversion to the mean.

*"You cannot expect a people so long oppressed to go from tyranny to liberty on a featherbed* , as Jefferson once said. The men of this state are going to rise up, as their jobs get taken by robots and wetbacks and they

get told their masculinity is toxic and their white heritage is innately undesirable and that they ought to just go off somewhere and die -as all that happens- well, they're going to rise up eventually and you and your friends and the rich and pampered -*the birds fine is song and feather* - are going to pay the price. Not because I say so, not because I want it, but because it's natural, inevitable, law. The ground gets wet when it rains, whether the weatherman wants it or predicts it or not.

"No one can flout the law, not man's law and not nature's law. I may have flouted man's law, but you people are flouting natural law, and my prison sentence is nothing compared to what is in store for you people. You think I'm bad, wait until you see the millions of men just like me who come next. Evolution capitalizes on all opportunities, nothing is wasted in the natural environment, and in an environment where real men are absent, nature will issue real men forth. The gap will be filled. They are coming and they *comin'* for you. Taleb once said that man fights the last war, but nature fights the next one.

"I regret neither the murders nor harsh words, I only wish I'd been able to do more in this way.

"But, your honor, you are sending me to jail, to prison, where I will have manifold opportunities to continue to take out the trash. You are sending me to the place with the most opportunities to dispatch bad men.

"But, remember, *the vast mass of our ship travels deep below the water line* , and deep within us like buried seeds, like cicada, are the ticks of the clock that demand every generation or so, that our genes for noble and honorable action against the filthy and low-borne weaklings who run things while we slumber, the ticks of the clock demand that we rise, rise, rise," [ed.note: he

said and showed his veneered teeth from the center of that black & grey beard to everyone able to look at him, as his head swiveled from side to side like a spotlight revealing all to all it touched.]

“Mr. MacLeod,” [ed.note: the judge said] “your actions have resulted in fort-six deaths; the deaths of men and women who had no jury trial, no due process, as they were not afforded the protections you have. You just eliminated them, acting as judge, jury and executioner. And yet, you take no note of the inherent injustice in this. You treat this unilateralism as unworthy of comment. You see only your side of the equation.

“I will not take your recommendation to *sanction* you as you put it. I condemn you. I do condemn you. And I will not waste this court’s time or try its patience any further; we’ve had enough speeches today. I find you remorseless and unfeeling; and I concur with the jury sentence that you serve forty-six life sentences plus ninety-nine years -of which you will serve consecutively- and I remand you to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, ADX in Florence Colorado effective immediately.

“May God have mercy on your soul.”

The judge said it and gaveled it as the roomed milled about unimpressed by it all.

Isaiah watched the courtroom video from two years previous -in 2018- for the second time and felt ambivalent about what to do. But the lab was the perfect home to start, and he knew that a garden was as good a place to begin a model of the world that he was a part of and above and under too. And so he sent the algorithms to the printer and had it construct some simple seeds for ivy and a couple dozen embryos for a few birds and some bees.

It then occurred to him that the inmate had not been sent to DOC, but to the BOP. Now he wondered what was said in the judge's chambers before the guilty verdict. But there were no records of it on the cloud.

"Not yet," Isaiah said.

#### **IV. 2012 e.v.**

They had made love until 0400hrs and she had politely -but with pleading tones- begged him to quit. Her jaw and legs and navel were sore and she felt in danger of running low on some fluids or nutrients of some kind.

He had carried her from the water to the bedroom and wiped her down with a big-nap towel dyed in dark grey. Candles were already burning and flooding and melting in little rivulets down sides and onto the original floor of his house built in 1949. The light source moved slightly in the breeze of the home's HVAC; still objects thus moved to the eye; moving things seemed to blink and jump ahead. He had remodeled it and it looked nothing like what one would expect in this neighborhood; it was modern and masculine in ways that she was just beginning to notice when the morning came and she awoke from a dream of being a bunny and dusting the hole that she and her bunny family all lived in as they spoke in hushed tones of the Fox and the Eagle that ran sorties and patrolled the *mews* of the prairie that served as their larger home.

She thought of the dream and the way her pelt looked; it was soft and light brown and she imagined petting it.

The walls, she inventoried, were a merlot, a burgundy red, mottled with black like a stone, a dark mountain, and the doors were all stained dark brown and with black hardware and no trim. It looked hewn not assembled, and she noticed that he was gone from the black sheets in the bed.

The morning light was grey and his artwork was shrouded in both shadows and glare, and as she looked at these drawn faces of men she didn't know she tried to read the banners that flapped in this paper-wind he'd made above and below in deteriorating script of words she didn't understand at all.

It was as if this whole house was a spell, an incantation uttered by Greek sybarites and sages and oracles who blinded themselves with uncut wine and throwing knives, and by staring too long at the sun. She was hungry and where God split her was sore; she felt warm in her chest. She needed to pee.

She walked to his master bathroom and the skylight poured clear rays over her; she squinted and sat her tiny porcelain butt on the toilet and looked at the drawings and paintings and photographs pinned to the wall. As she emptied her bladder her mind was filled with these strange images and she noticed that he kept bottles of amber, brown and black in the open shelving between the his & her vessel sinks, no labeled products were seen; he had dumped lotions and potions -and whatever else- into jars after discarding the original packaging, and she noticed everything seemed slightly old-fashioned -woven in with updated fixtures- creating a hybrid not unlike he was: *half ultra-sophisticated, half barbaric as fuck*, she thought as she rolled the toilet-paper like a scroll around her waiting hand. She giggled at this thought, as a shiver ran up her spine from the tickle of her excreting stream.

She remembered he spoke in French or Latin, *or maybe made up words*, she thought.

He talked of the cosmos out there, now she looked up to the skylight above her, as if it was right down in here, and she then thought of her own womb and wondered if any of his seed would take root. She smelled food now, like meat, and flowers too; then she remembered the Stargazers -the lilies-

and the small animal bones. She looked at her face in the mirror and noticed his scruff had chaffed her face a bit and then she looked between her thighs and smiled at the same red bumps and rug burn down there.

She walked gingerly to the kitchen -naked and disheveled and *blasé* - as he was clothed only in black underwear and cooking atop the gas range with a plate of fruit and goat cheese waiting for her to nosh on while he finished their *entrees* on the flame.

"Motorcycle ride today, little tiny bastard?" he asked with a voice that made certain she knew he was joking about the insult but serious about the ride.

"Sure, *whatcha* cooking?" she asked as she sat at the barstool counter top at 39".

"Tenderloin with black mission figs and raw cashews; with basil and a peanut sauce. You like goat's cheese?" he asked.

"I never had it," she said as she squirmed.

"Well, it's lovely," he said as if that word made total sense coming from his beastly maw.

"You're lovely," she said and laughed at the incongruity of it as it landed on his back and obelisk frame.

"I feel lovely," he said with a grin that reared up with a snort of a laugh as he tended to the low flame on the range.

"Your house is weird," she said as she gobbled down strawberries and blue berries and crackers so thin they were translucent. "But, in a good way, like, an artist's house."

"I am an artist," he said.

"Oh yeah, what kind?" she thought maybe that's what he did for a living.

"Life artist," he said with a wry smile.

“Fuck artist,” she said to correct him. “Jesus, I didn’t know my body could cum like that. I still feel like I’m vibrating from it. What kind of space alien are you?”

“The kind that is never leaving,” he said as he scooped the medium-rare steak onto his and her plates and arranged the nuts and caramelized fruit and greens and juice onto the center medallions and then carried them to the brown table of square legs and edges -nothing tapering, or relenting, they were thick at top and bottom- and sat down. He then rose quickly and pulled out her chair and beckoned her over.

She sat down on the chair with her bare ass and he said it was *ok* and that she didn’t need a shirt or a towel. But she cautioned if she left a little juice behind he shouldn’t complain; to which he agreed.

They ate and talked simply, of dreams and sleep and soreness and the taste of wine still in their mouths. The music -Brian Eno’s *Apollo* - from the integrated speakers played softly; meant to assuage. She noticed the sounds waft in like the wind or the songs of birds, and it made her breathe easier and chew her food slowly and stare at his curry powder colored walls. They too were mottled with white and ochre and darkness, achieving the same stone look that blended with the grey and black tile floor more seamlessly than she thought possible with those two different schemes.

*The flowers and plants, everywhere, like a little shop of horrors,* she said to herself with a chewy grin.

And she admitted that the artwork and furniture made of metal or dark wood of all the same cut and design made it all somehow work, despite its strangeness and unconventional colors and textures and layout. The kitchen had obviously been redone, updated with all modern appliances and stripped of cabinets in favor of restaurant style racks and hooks just like the diner she had to be back



at by nine tonight. She would nap, she thought, after their ride. And she thought he might drive her to work, as she had no car of her own. She was poor, but, she didn't feel poor, as she was just nine months out of high school and had more than many of her friends.

She had her own apartment and had forsaken college, so she had no debt; he would later tell her that even more importantly she had not been saddled with the debt of group-think endemic to liberal colleges, *an even heavier burden*, he has said with no grin. She was happy to waitress and really what she wanted was a dog. *A dog would be better than a car, infinitely better*, she agreed with herself. She looked at this man, and he was a man, like a man in the sense of the word used to describe the species itself. *He was so big*, she thought, *and wrought all over like a sculpture, and written all over like in the inside of a tomb.*

*He was kinda defaced, beat up a bit*, but it looked fine to her.

She looked at her own flanks and thighs to see if she was similarly hewn and taut. She surmised that -for a girl- she was. She was not fat, not like so many of her friends who ate pop tarts and smoked weed all day; she ate eggs and didn't do any drugs. The drugs she was getting from Ismail were for her roommate, who wanted ecstasy but didn't know anyone who sold it.

She was born in Nebraska and had come to Colorado at age fifteen with her mother who had married again. Her step-dad was, *ok*, she guessed, but he was cold and quiet and made her feel like he was waiting for her to move out. So she did three weeks before graduation and that was almost ten months ago. She felt like a woman for sure now, she had only had sex with two other boys, and they were nothing like this thing that sat to her right breathing and snorting and frothing all on the mouth like a charger, *like a horse of*

*the apocalypse* , she invented and laughed with her mouth full of food -tilting her head back, letting the curls drape over her little tits- and her mind all stuffed with ideas from the Bible. She had been raised on the Bible, she knew the *apocalypse* and more.

“What?” he asked as he noticed her laugh, and now her oddly staring at him.

“Nothing, you’re *kinda* a bad ass,” she said down playing what she actually thought.

“*Kinda* , huh?” he said, taking a compliment as an insult as he always did.

“Yeah, and my pussy is sore, dude,” she said as she ate the grapes from the common plate and let her steak cool.

“Suck it up, buttercup,” he said.

“Yeah, well I’m small.”

“I like you too peanut,” he said pushed the golden olive oil and black balsamic bottles to the edge of the table and chewed his arugula and goat cheese as it swaddled the bloody *filet* . The bread had holes in the center and crust - *and was as soft as her laugh* , he thought- as he pressed it into the oil and vinegar.

“Peanut! I like that,” she said and laughed just as he had suspected she would; deburred; sonorous; like a girl. *Yeah* , she then thought in swirls of things like opening doors in a gameshow, *I want a dog* . And she hoped it talked to her, although she suspected it would not as she looked at the plated food and -as he got up and walked to the kitchen- then at his back as it rose like canyon walls over his spine.

He grabbed the ice bucket from the fridge and brought it to the table apologizing for forgetting it as she poopooed his chagrin. He popped the cork on the *Champagne* and the foam and gold traded places in her glass as he poured his

own glass next. She sniffed it and the effervescence tickled her nose and as she drank it the *pinot noir* grapes from *Epernay* tickled her brain *via* her tongue and mouth and then her belly too.

She looked at the label and said it was good, and nice and cold and went perfect with the meal. He smiled and said he too like it all but what made it special was that she was there and he was grateful -to the gods and the universe *writ large*- for bringing her to his attention. She talked about how sexy she thought he was but that she just had to know how old he was, because she thought maybe twenty-nine or thirty but he talked like someone older, and so she thought maybe forty now. And she kept talking to qualify the ask but he answered and interrupted this nonsense.

"Thirty-eight," he said.

"Yeah, that makes sense, but you look good for thirty-eight, like damn good," she said seriously, and he tried to take that as a compliment. "What's that?" she then asked and pointed -with another grape in her hand- to a framed poster in the corner.

"Ralph Steadman's, *Fahrenheit 451* ," he said of the print that measured at twenty-eight inches by thirty-six.

"It's chaotic -crazy- and scary, *kinda* ," she said. She noticed the veins on his left shoulder and neck.

"Yeah, that's the world we live in, sweetie," he said, and she nodded as if she trusted that he was privy to parts of the world she didn't quite see.

## 14. III.

It's common knowledge that weeds cannot be killed by clipping the leaves

The Proud Highway [Thompson, Hunter S]

Convexity trumps knowledge

The Black Swan [Taleb, Nassim]

The fringe is running the show. The fringes are scary. The fringes are willing to go places the rest of us aren't. I spend a lot of time focused on the fringes because the fringes have become terrifying and the middle has become cowardly

The Joe Rogan Experience #1320 [Weinstein, Eric]

## **I. 2035 e.v.**

Jack had been out in the forest for three days and was sick.

He couldn't keep anything down or in. And he smelled bad. His guts felt like a corkscrew, his throat felt like it had been turned inside out with a gear puller. His eyes kept watering and he was now sucking his fingers after wiping the tears just to have some fluids go in instead of out.

His goddamn jaw hurt now.

"Fuck that guy," he said in a whisper -and then felt like a coward- but didn't bother saying it louder.

He saw the bear again, this time up on the ridge. He just stared at Jack. And Jack stared back, and he wiped his left eye again with the back of his hand.

The virus attacked not the guts, nor the immune system exactly. It attached itself to the sex cells; the gametes. And then they went dark and quiet and morphed into a jacketed protein not unlike DNA itself; just like Jack's DNA.

He felt an itch to destroy his cock in the auger of *her*, to punish each end of the parts of he and her that reproduce. He'd fuck her to observe the instructions of the disease; the parasite would command and he'd fucking obey. He'd rub pollen on her that he'd gathered from the bell of the flower, he'd wait until the last moment and cut her apart -scatter her- to restart the world. His mind replayed a dozen

memories of *Aeneas* and *Helen of Troy* ; of *Gilgamesh* and the harem plot against *Ramesses III*.

Then he lost consciousness in the forest.

His *bots* allowed him to fall into a heap out on the plain.

They hovered above but did not intercede. He fell asleep as his own odors -body-bacteria and vomitus and excrement-intervened in his dreams:

*"If it's one thing I have noticed in myself and others, "* Blax finally said, *"is a lack of courage in facing pain. We avoid pain at all costs; at all costs to our self-esteem, our erudition, our enlightenment, our relationships, our health, our integrity and our ability to be honest with ourselves and others. I've never been more sure that everyone is lying to me at all times than I am right now. I've come to believe that everyone is a pathological liar and it's because they're in pain and have almost no courage to face that pain. But unless we acknowledge why, then we will never cure the underlying rationale, "* he said as he lifted the nose and offered a cabeceo to the area behind Jack's gaze. But Jack couldn't turn the head, and only barely the eyes.

He saw white petals long like cow tongue; he smelled something unique.

*"Loneliness is lethal and the risk of early death is at 45%. Alcoholism is at 35%. Obesity? A mere 20%, "* Blax said as he looked west to the setting sun. *"And to tell the truth is to guarantee a life of loneliness. You think we don't think of this -feel this- each time we have a choice to tell the truth or to lie?*

*"The brain of a lonely person has brain region attenuation in the amygdalin and dmPFC areas that are critical for empathy. The more lonely we are the more we look for and see social threats, the more we only see our*

*own pain and risk. We become more paranoid and more likely to perceive others as a threat the more lonely we get. This is a classic positive feedback loop -in the negative sense- like melting sea ice allowing for more thermal absorption thus heating the sea water even more. Sleep patterns are disrupted by more nighttime micro interruptions; cortisol released upon waking is increased in the lonely.*

*"I'm asking you to stop running from the pain and feel it. Feel it. Let it wash over you like slick sweat, like rain. Do not get out of the rain. Stand and face it.*

*"Being in pain has shit to teach you. And I'm going to help translate what it is saying. Your lie equals your pain. Wulf said that; and he was right. But he forgot to add the corollary: the truth isn't going to feel much better.*

*"So, we better take Orwell's words as a guide-light. He once said that what separated him from others was not talent or intellect but his power of facing hard truths. This is not as facile and simple-minded as it may seem. How often do you face anything squarely; how often do you refuse to turn away even slightly from abrading winds, grit and the storms and whirlwinds that move in off the water and onto your shore?*

*"How often do you stand -refuse to run from- the hail? "* he asked. Jack smelled rain, ozone, then the sweet lily again.

*"I knew what I wasn't doing 99% of the time; I knew it by paying attention when I did it just that once; just that one time. The example of one moment of facing a storm illuminated just how many times I had not done it and would not do it in the future unless I changed my whole philosophy on life.*

*"Your pain equals your enlightenment, and that can turn -one day- into some kind of truth. And that truth will maybe, if we are lucky, feel good for like ten seconds before more pain is heaped upon us. We accept and embrace pain as our lot. We do not go around the pain, we go through it. We reach all the way down to Hell,"* he said and watched their faces now in the sun. They squinted from the star so it was tougher for him to gauge their reaction *via* their faces reacting to the overpowering of this other source of light.

*"Hell. "*

He exited the REM cycle for 14 minutes; now returning to NREM2 sleep with sine wave up and down like canyon -basin and *escarpments* - as his brain cleared out *amyloid-beta* proteins like a draining tub; body temperature dropped one degree; his skin pimpled at the arms and legs; they did not move at all. Sleep spindles began and the *sigma-waves* ran between billions of connections at the *thalamic reticular nucleus* producing long-term memories from the *hippocampus* to now at the *neo-cortex* . Olfactory inputs from the forest, humus of floor, smoke from the fire south prompted the reactivation of the cells. His brain fired like Tesla-coil; like dry-lightning earth from outer-space.

Mountain lion scat entered last; furthest away, but most redolent; sweet and light as his body order fought it like two armies at palisade. The nose twitched as did the vascular side of the neck.

*Monoamines* increased. Respiration maintained a rhythm. The *neo-cortex* gathered more data from the right hemisphere and consolidated the topography of the dream map that was cut into oblong shapes. The transfer of dream data to the *neo-cortex* happened in bursts between dreams. The sanguinary and scatological odors matched the memory; he learned of the forest now in the woods of the



memory; the smell of the memory and the recall of *now* aligned as was required by the CNS and its structure. The *audio-cortex* distorted the rustle of leaves, the flap of wings, the wind high in the boughs of the trees. Body *temp* dropped half a degree.

The malice of bears moved in.

He smelled the iron of his own blood; the brain shaped it into lilies of six, then nine, then twelve. Another memory lined up like tumbler in lock. Time had run out on this cycle. Chemicals made electricity, spark made fire in the mind.

Now he entered REM sleep again:

*"En recherche du temps perdu,"* he said when Jack had asked what he was reading. The pink and white stargazer lilies dropped stamens of Scythian red on the counter. The piquant odor reached him and seemed to carry each word on a blanket of aroma. There was a coin stamped with the letters:

*Paints like the harlot...*

He handled as if he might spend it later on.

*"The hero myth is the compendium of the best traits in a man that allow for across-the-board dominance hierarchy success. And that is important for man because he isn't just an elephant walrus with size as the only attribute that determines success.*

*"Man has all manner of ways to succeed, from being the life of the party to making money to being creative to being a good hunter or being intelligent in a uniquely special domain. And the hero is often an amalgam of these things. But, I want to introduce you to the anti-hero of myth and especially of modern myth in the age of Kali Yuga.*

*"You see, the anti-hero need not be a man for all seasons, a gregarious man, a man who exhibits traits that win across several domains. The anti-hero can be one thing and one thing only: he can dominate via power; raw power and force of will. And as a story archetype he can be useful to men like us who while renaissance men and capable of being the hero, we don't want to merely play the game well. We don't want to be Bo Jackson, who can dominate at every sport invented by man," Blax said.*

*"Even archery," Jack Four said.*

*"Even archery, that's right. While we could dominate economically, artistically, sexually, physically, charismatically, socially, and on and on, we don't want to. We want to create our own game and dominate at that. And that is what the anti-hero represents. He says, fuck your nice-guy bullshit, I'm gonna do one thing and one thing well. From Pontius Pilot to Caius Marcius, from Ahab to Heisenberg, from Byron's Corsair to Mickey and Mallory Knox. The anti-hero says, I am going to play a different game and wipe all of you fucks off the map," Blax said.*

*They smirked and looked around and found solace in the likeness of their brothers like mirrors that only reflected no background; one thing: themselves.*

*"We're going to play a different game. And remember, we must examine why we want to do this at three levels of analysis. The terrestrial -our medium sized, medium speed, medium timeframe world- our terroir right here and right now.*

*"But we also must look down to our DNA and our epigenetics, and also above, at ontology and meta story. And once we have what EO Wilson called consilience - between all levels of instantiation and analysis- we will*

*have a much more robust and beautiful and defensible rationale for our lives.*

*"We will have purpose that is bulletproof from the shallow monolithic analysis of the squares and the dorks and the pragmatic who run our fatuous world right now. When they can only see one level of anything: the pragmatic, the commercial, the flat and banal world of money and laws and getting along with the in-laws; you know, avoiding an argument with the neighbor or the ball-busting wife. While they're focusing on that stupid shit we will be above them and below them shoving them down into the grave we just dug under their feet," he said. Each word landed on them like a wasp, each punctuation like a sting. Each conceit burrowed in them like venom, each idea was birthed and found succor within their still youthful minds. He spoke as each word was scattered like seeds.*

*"This next century is ours; and it's because not," he paused, "not because we played their games better than them but because we invented a totally new game."*

*Blax began pacing in front of them and they set their jaws and squinted the eyes. They felt tight about the chest and squeezed their fists to dissipate heat.*

*"Henry Ford said he was successful because he ignored what the public wanted: they wanted merely faster horses. He gave them what they didn't have the intelligence or creativity to want: cars.*

*"We are going to give them what they cannot even imagine they want. We are gonna give them death and re-birth as totally new machines. They don't know it, but they will want it. However, like Ford did, we have to ignore what they say they want and give them something else entirely. Humans are like children, you cannot expect them to know what they need. You have*

*to force them to eat their veggies and work their muscles. It sounds like tyranny until you realize the tyranny of sickness and weakness and unhappiness that will befall them once you let them do whatever they want. People in a liberal culture are not happy; they are sick and sad and it's because they have been given too long a leash.*

*"This is how I prove my love and respect for you all; by governing you so you can maximize your own potential. And once you've reached a level of expertise and competence you will naturally leave the nest. And humans will eventually be allowed that freedom, but not now. And that is the role of the father; a role that men have abandoned in favor of being popular; of being liked and not hen-pecked. And we -you and I- are going to restore that patriarchal paradigm, whether they like it or not, " he said and then -on the pad as the light grew more blue and more white- he moved into tiger stance and Jack One called out to the other Jacks to fall into that formation at once.*

NREM1 cycle returned and he awoke believing he'd not been asleep at all; merely going off line for one second or less. The bear was at his feet and interested in the bottom of his boots not his now open eyes. He felt no fear; his response time had been slowed; epinephrine cut off. His immune system continued to consolidate information from the CRISPRcas-9 vectors from his gametes. The *hippocampal* memories stopped transference to the *neo-cortex* as the total of 93-minutes of memory consolidation there had stopped. Isaiah downloaded the *hippocampal* memories and the new *neo-cortical* ones and measured the discrepancy in their fealty to the original input.

Amyloid-Beta proteins were washed away by the cerebrospinal fluid. Jack Four passed out again as the black

bear licked the salt from his legs.

## **II. 2035 e.v.**

They stood in the dark of the 0457hrs clock.

They had found their spots with a new aperture gene-edit that allowed a fraction of the UV spectrum and additional light from the normal spectrum to be registered on the *visual cortex* .

They had a very low-res version of night vision. Their rods and cones were detuned -made colorblind- and thus contrast increased by 34%. The dark became one thing; as did the light.

Relief appeared against each thing; each boundary of block, leaf, moon-covering cloud.

He smoked his cigar and they focused on the enlarging and contracting grey glow of the ash tip and the small corona that bloomed on his face as he drew air through the *cigarillo* .

He blew out a breath of smoke and CO<sup>2</sup> and stepped forward and spoke. "I don't want to put too much emphasis on this, because I feel it is unfair to the man to do so. But my father was not an educated man, and he had had to scramble just to survive in this world. And because of that he didn't know much about the things that I think are essential to understand about the world. Things essential to comprehend about the culture and about men and women and about the self and the body and the Darwinian model that is operational at every level of life," he said this and stuffed the slim cigar in the mouth and pulled on it until the mouth was warm with smoke. He felt guilty and stupid for the way he'd hammered his father a thousand and one times and forgave him only the once.

He blew smoke and spoke.

“He was like John Adams, who had said -of himself- that he studied war and revolution and law so his kids could study politics and science and art so that *their* kids could study poetry and -I think he said pottery or some shit- anyway. I know I’ve likely mentioned this before, and if I repeat an anecdote and you’ve all heard it then in unison you may stop me, but even if one of you hasn’t heard it I’d like it if you all allowed me to repeat the damn story for the benefit of the one who hasn’t heard it -or comprehended it- yet,” Blax said with preemptive pique. He smoked and breathed and blinked and focused the eyes.

He obliquely looked from behind the cloud of his exhalation at each Jack. He looked for discord, dissent.

“You know we all have the same genome and because genetics is like ninety-percent of who we -as a species- are, then we are all very similar. But the ten-percent that is different is really quite different and so none of us are going to be paying attention to the exact same things at any given moment, ok? So, anyway, my father was not an educated man, and so he couldn’t teach me what I am teaching you,” he said as he -in his mind’s eye- saw grey rats in black mazes, he saw white floors and Plexiglas, he saw brass. He saw the pups of the rats turn in circles -retrograde and sad- in the corners of the ninety-degree turns some sat down, some sniffed the walls and others ran fast.

He blinked and held the cigar far away with the head pointing afield as he adjusted the suit jacket at the cuffs.

“He just -well, he gave me these genes, which is like giving me the winning lotto ticket, right? But- well, he didn’t give me hardly any instruction on how to spend the money. Have you ever read about what happens to people who win the lottery?” he asked and scoffed and looked down and saw the belt buckle in black and satin sheen, he felt their eyes

upon him when he looked away. He felt he couldn't raise them. He felt like failure was a path of a thousand and one ways; success singular and as narrow as the Osiris shaft.

"It ain't pretty," he said into his chest and saw the beard like twain rope lay upon the tie, the grey hairs like marbled veins and the outline of mountain ranges at night. But the words kept coming and so he let them out of their cage.

"So, I made a huge number of mistakes that could have been prevented if he was a bit more educated. But like I said, that was really because he was dirt poor, fatherless himself, in Arkansas in the fifties. I mean he was fucked. He was totally fucked, ok? So, just surviving and making it to marriage and kids and feeding them and keeping them healthy was a miracle for him. And yet, I," he paused. He was going to admit to his condemnation. But he refrained.

"And he had intelligence obviously, as the genetic component of intelligence -the heritability- is pretty severe. In other words, smart kids come from smart parents ninety-nine out of one-hundred times. Anyway, I'm hoping -and the reason your education is so severe, and I know you often think it too severe, like standing in the cold at O-dark-30 and listening to me say things that could easily be said indoors with a cup of coffee and a Danish in your hands is kind of a drag- but the reason I am so obsessed with this level of training is that I think that if he had combined my native intelligence with a high-level intellectual, cultural and marital training platform I could have been like *Alexander* or *Charlemagne* or something quite spectacular.

"I feel like my life was squandered is what I'm saying and I don't want your life to be wasted that way," Blax said as he looked them in the eye quickly so as to make sure they wouldn't -themselves- look away. There was a connection between speaker and listener, and eye contact demanded something in the same way.

He chewed on the short stick, he let the nicotine mix with his saliva. He forced himself to breathe. He saw images of ships, the curse of exile, the way sending a people away is just a fractal of the quartering the British did; it makes a man incomplete. He lands ashore and cannot admit to who he is, cannot count on anyone, and when he finds a desperate woman he cannot be father; for he cannot tell his child who he is. America was a nation of no history, no connection, an arm in the dirt, a leg over there, a head rolling down hill.

“Further, I didn’t have a brother worth a fuck, ok? You guys have me, your father essentially, and you have one another which is a huge advantage. I hope you see that already, but I hope that perception increases exponentially as time moves forward and you see what a crucial advantage it is to have brothers around you of which you each have three.”

His coder loaded the data on the percentage of colonists that supported the revolution, the mere three percent that fought against the crown. More and more data loaded, as genomes made columns from English merchants and laboring Ulster-Scots of Boston to aristocratic farmers in Virginia to the pioneers that pushed west or the slavers who ran plantations like ants operated colonies, all sieved and sorted autonomically through hundreds of years; genomes labeled so that they finally knew who they were in this madness of American mélange and chaos and blankness. Decades of steadfastness and diaspora co-mingled until synthesis of genomes was left in three-story homes in patrician new England and Linkhorn scofflaws rode low-slung choppers to the watery edge. *One percenters*, they were called, *those bikers deemed unsanctioned by the American Motorcycle Association*, he thought as his coder allowed it all to rise on his interface like a memory or idea on how to notice a flaw in plan.



And the math opened trap doors of three percent of one class -and one percent of another- it all fell into a new elongated sarcophagi and four-chambered tomb. And then the coder pulled it all back like inhaled smoke and his mind returned to his speech.

“Now, I want to begin with one idea that I hope will permeate and soak into and dominate your every idea. And this is it: I almost instinctively now look at every action, at every phenomenon, as having three levels of material life, of existence, of reality that are useful to analyze. Ok?” he paused and they all said that they indeed, *copied that* .

“If the human being is to maximize his survivability and excellence as a multi-purpose animal -and we are the Swiss-army knife of organisms, man- then... well, look, I mean some animals are so specialized that they literally can only live in one species of tree; right?” he was breaking his sentence structure and going laterally, and even at this early hour, the Jacks were going along with him as much as they could.

“Some Amazonian frogs have one tree that they can live in and if you move them three-meters away they die; not unlike if you put us -as breathing humans- on the moon. But -on earth- humans thrive anywhere, from the *Inuit* in the arctic to those *Maasai* warriors on the African savanna to *Mongols* on the steppe with their mares. The *Comanche* among the buffalo. *Kalenjin* live austere lives and even the West African *Wolof* and *Fulani* made it both in *Namibia* and then Georgia an ocean away as if they hadn't just been transported thousands of miles and hundreds of years in the future to some dystopian hell.

“People are multi-purpose tools. We adapt, we -and we adapt mostly because of one thing- well, we can make avatars of ourselves over and over and place ourselves into

thousands of possible futures by thinking and feeling in new ways.

“Think of it: we think, we imagine ourselves doing this or that or another thing and that’s like having three lives right there,” he said and spit the small square of leaf from his tongue; the wrapper of the dark maduro *cigarillo* slowly disintegrated from his chewing and deforming as it heated and cooled. He wiped the spittle from the lip.

“Imagine if you have three lives to live and each was a practice round. Well, that is what thinking abstractly does. We create many examples of what we could do by thinking it through. And we join forces with our family and tribe to model it out even more, where your three thoughts are added to his three thoughts and three more by you and you and you, Jack,” he said as he looked at each man in succession. The smoke rose up in twin strands, interlacing and coming apart. The hand manipulated the cigar, the teeth rose up and down, the tongue slapped around.

His body absorbed a dozen chemicals that made it passed the blood-brain barrier.

“That is a huge evolutionary advantage. And so, I want you to take that fact and add it to this one: for every level you look at something, an idea, a phenomenon, an object, a problem, a person, a solution, and a story,” he paused and let that last word hang there. “For every level you examine it -at which you examine it- there is at least one above and one below that is operational, that is useful. And in evolution anything that works is true, the irony is that pragmatism is tantamount to the most idealistic of truths. And if you do that, you’ve just begun to play three-dimensional chess. Now you’ve created the space in which to think of three possible future actions, right?” he asked.

The boys were greys and white outlines to him in the dark; their heads moved and eyes blinked and he saw their hands

behind their backs. Nobody spoke for a moment. The sounds of the pre-dawn hummed and then went silent; blew past and kept distance at times.

Jack Two missed his mother right then. He felt she'd be up in the night thinking too of him.

He recalled the breast and being weaned; the way she had fed him like that for three years and never refused him anything. He remembered the way she snuck into bed with him and pet his head when he was drifting in and out of sleep. She told him he was going to make it, she always said, *you'll make it Jackie* , and he remembered how he believed her until he grew taller than her and then all at once he knew that the world was bigger than them both; and that her words were no protection at all. But he remembered the teat, and the milk and the way she brushed his early blond hair from his eyes and the way she refused to even trim his nails or cut his hair; he recalled the way it grew into his face and ears until his father had taken him on a trip into town, to a barber. He'd sat there -in the chair with a booster seat that came out of nowhere- and in the chair they trimmed his hair and his nails -taking his shoes off and his socks- and he recalled that he'd drank out of a real glass, no plastic tumbler like at home.

He thought of the way her chest smelled -like vanilla & honey- and how even now he made calendula tea with milk and if they were out of it -out of milk- he just didn't want that marigold tea. He lost all interest in the chamomile confection, and he wondered what else was like that. *What else would be cleaved in half and lose all value ?* he asked.

"You're thinking," Blax went on, "in your mind abstractly, and you've thought of each of those things at three different levels, the terrestrial -that is our level here on earth at the level and speed that we naturally see and process- and also -next- one level down at the atomic level and -finally- one

level up at the cosmic level. And so now you have three versions each with three version themselves. That gives you nine ways to examine a thing, an idea, an object, a problem and solution and a person and a story thus told.” He paused and they nodded and he began walking in front of them as he liked to do.

He lit the burn barrels.

He’d had Jack Four collect downed branches and trash and then soak it all in gasoline overnight. The fires lit in a wash like thin tide over rocks; and then as the flames rose they were beaten about by the wind at the edges. He walked from barrel to barrel dropping long matches with windproof heads.

Blax now had yellow and white outline to his front; they watched him lit from under the chin.

Their coders gave them updates on lightning strikes in the area. Wind reports came in every twenty-two minutes.

“And stories are just other people’s ideas that they’ve thought through on a problem that you could use some help on. A story is a map that shows you one possible path to get to where you *wanna* go. And if you aren’t merely *a skimmer of pages*, as Melville derided, if you admit that each story has three levels of analysis that are useful, now you’ve got something, man. You’ve got a 3D map of the world given to you by a relatively wise man. A man that’s seen three dimensions of a thing. A man’s -well, in the case of *Lucretius* or *Seneca* or *Homer* or *Shakespeare* - you’ve got a wise man’s stories that are hundreds of years old. And that is ancient wisdom, man.

“That -by definition- is wisdom; by very dint of the fact that it has survived all these years, protected and transcribed and birthed by monks scribbling in monasteries over the millennia -wars and plagues outside their doors, corruption

and venality inside the blocks, the rocks that made up their castle or hovel- you got preserved tomes in tombs and *athenaeums* from *Greece* to *Gaul* to *Georgia* where Miss O'Conner's books are still preserved and likely will be for a thousand more years. Anything around for long is likely to be around for longer," Blax said as he bent the neck to relieve it of some of the weight. He thought of all the ways in which what he'd just said wasn't exactly true.

"Like you old man," said Jack One, immediately seeing the contradiction.

"Exactly, you snot nose brat. I've been around one generation longer than you and so I deserve some respect - maybe even reverence- for being able to survive the trials and travails -and crucifixion nails- and the slaps in the face from tiny females," he said with rhyming mirth as they each laughed. Blax smirked to take the sting out of his *bravura* and pride. He said *one* , but it was *three* generations between them they all thought.

They ignored it and instead thought of four, five different things.

"So, never refuse your duty to look at -at least- three levels of a thing, ok? This will serve you well in life. Never just take it at face value because first of all, those levels -the atomic and the cosmic- are real, they existed before we had microscopes or telescopes to confirm their existence, alright? Those levels were there before we had a face to take something at face value, shit. That's real. And once we knew that pathogens existed we had a germ theory of disease and that helped us in ways we can't even imagine today. My God, that helped us.

"So, many people take The Good Book at face value as a whale tale only. But, it's not just that. It's a trope, an extended metaphor for God and chaos and man's rebellion against death and injustice. And there' s one level up and

one level down that is there for us to examine. Authors gave that to us, partly on purpose and partly subconsciously, as all art is. All art has a meaning hidden by the author on purpose and one he hid subconsciously so even he couldn't find it. It's like a time capsule that could only be divined, sorted out later on; when new philosophers with new eyes and new hearts could see it," he said as he thought of how to even write stories down was a technology, and allowed man to get away with what ancient man never could: diaspora, exile, coming apart. The ancients had to stick together so father could tell son -son tell his son- the stories -the maps- of the terrain. But written accounts allowed man to have no family or tribe at all.

Literate man could cheat and get wisdom without ever being part of a clan.

*Books were a cheat like any technology; and they made men soft* , he thought and it made him wince and place the cigar back in the mouth like pacifier, the tannins of the tobacco pulling his mind away from his thoughts and back into his body.

"Well, you are those new philosophers and I want you to remember what I've said here today," he said as they nodded and felt imbued with his imprimatur, his stamp, an escutcheon of quadrants and icons and mottos. They all felt like they had permission to be who they were now and in the future.

"Ok, enough *yappin'* let's go through our stances. Horse," he barked lowly as he thought of the dryness of heaven, the absence of seawater in the final domain of God. The Jacks all squatted into Horse stance and held fast. He thought of the Roman chargers crossing the rivers of Gaul, the way the sluiceways ran to the sea as did the sinner. The stonefish, scorpionfish, lionfish of the Red Sea appeared cleaved in two, cleaved in one again; short-finned *makos* in the

shallows were attacking men from the coast. The Jacks looked forward as their eyes increased contrast where the light was most dim. He felt the anomie of the man who transgresses, the lift of the corvids and doves, as he then felt the eventuality of all waters ending in an ocean that covered all but the mountain tops of this world.

The wind stopped for a while as the first hint of the sun made the sky dark blue instead of their new kind of bright black.

### **III. 2035 e.v.**

*Sadness, like permanent sadness -as a condition of life- is the thing we cannot admit to; seemingly we cannot do it as a culture.*

*We must always insist there is hope.*

*The ancients knew there was winter and times of tragedy, Kali Yuga, Armageddon, the 144,000 days of the 13th Baktun, the eschatology of Yawm al-Qiy ā mah, Shambhala and Ragnarok at last.*

*But not modern man, like children we expect days to supplant nights, harvest of four seasons, infinite growth and a thousand year Reich.*

Jack One lowered his hand as the trees' shadows began to wave darkness over his eyes; dark enough to sooth them. And the concrete looked camouflaged in both shadow and light. Jack felt chagrin at his own lies manifold and garish. He thought of how the truth might sound in his mouth; before it reached anyone's ears.

Blax abruptly dismissed them to their work; this being their lunch break and still a few hours of winter sun remained of the day. The garden needed tended and the trucks needed fluid changes in the crank cases and differentials and

master cylinders which had -from heat- turned coffee black from a once cherry red. Their weapons needed cleaned and oiled and the optics calibrated as well.

He knew they would think on it, and that their youth would attenuate their ability to sense just how deep the pain of loneliness could go. *Loneliness had almost nothing to do with whether there were people around or not*, Blax thought. *It takes age and wisdom to feel alone around people; to pay attention to what isn't said. To the note unplayed*, he then thought.

If one was not to be lonely in a crowd it had everything to do with the quality of those interactions. Blax had had people around his whole life and was never lonelier than when around them. His own family was so soulless and machine-like, so dead inside, that he felt his heart break -in more places than he thought possible- each time he had to be around them. They had made him despair that anyone was human at all. Imagine attempting to feel comfort in a room full of robots who whirred with weather reports or in a cage of stuffed animals who spoke in three pat phrases on things that made no sense to a man's actual world.

*The Jacks would come to see that later ; right now*, Blax thought, *it was just an ephemeral quality, a hint, an adumbrated notion that would be attenuated by his rearing of them and the presence of the other Jacks too* . He hoped they would never suffer the deep anomie that he had, but he also wanted them to understand it so as to connect with the deep and permanent loneliness that had beset the best sorts of people on earth. *The most moral, the most sensitive, the most decent, the most generous, the most intelligent and feeling of people were the ones who necessarily suffered the most. This was not philosophy*, Blax thought, *it was foundational math*.



*This was true exactly because of their rarity, and this was, he thought, part of why Isaiah had made so many of them, so as to give them the one thing he had never had: support. The Jacks would understand each other and be able to give succor to their idiosyncratic feelings that no one on earth could. Imagine being the only man with eyes in a world made ugly by the flailing and blind, and then to have men of such acuity as yourself dig in to make the world beautiful again , he thought. In just the same way as you would , he added as he blinked the eyes.*

*Imagine finally being a part of a group, a team, a tribe, a family; a family that didn't require lying and shallowness and bullshit just to belong. Imagine how sonorous such a harmony to just such a song.*

He felt a brief moment of envy, for the pain they would lack. They had one another, when he had no one, no one until it was too late.

## 15. *Shto takoye* ?

In times of radical uncertainty what was once common becomes profound  
Anti-fragile [Taleb, Nassim]

“You know,” Daddy said, “it’s some who can live their whole life out without asking about it and it’s others has to know *why* it is, and this boy is one of the latters,” he put on his black hat and looked up

A Good Man is Hard to Find [O’Connor, Flannery]

It was all well and good enough in the Southland, under the law of love and fellowship, to respect private property and personal feelings; but in the Northland, under law of club and fang, whoso took such things into account was a fool, and in so far as he observed them he would fail to prosper. Not that Buck reasoned it out. He was fit, that was all, and unconsciously he accommodated himself to the new mode of life

The Call of the Wild [London, Jack]

### **I. 2033 e.v.**

“But Steven, that is not what I said. I need you to focus on the actual words said, ok?” Isaiah said as MO nodded in agreement.

“Ok, sorry, please rephrase it,” Steven said.

“I -just to add context- was re-reading some texts on phenomenology and the transition from pre-Enlightenment thinking to modern thinking and a few things jumped out that I think are relevant to our discussion here.

“First, modern thinkers have effectively stripped value or subjective experience of a thing from their overt description of that thing; they claim that they can -and should like to be- objective. This manifests in many ways. But, two things: first, there is a price to pay for this mentality, it forces the innate value judgments that are endogenous to all creatures with a sufficiently complex central nervous system,” Isaiah began as he was interrupted mid-sentence.

“Ok, stop there, what does that mean?” Steven asked.

“Ok, first, people have innate emotional responses mediated by their central nervous system, their allostatic system, their serotonergic systems, orienting reflex, ok? You with me?” Isaiah asked and thought he might die from having to explain such basic things to an ostensibly intelligent creature. He thought he and Steven would be playing *fetch* next if this didn’t work.

“Yes, people feel things based upon how their body and brain make them feel due to the perceived meaning of a thing or interaction; like a value judgment,” Steven recapitulated. The lab’s screen filled with models of the brain, the *vmPFC* and the *anterior cingulate gyrus* worked - each brain region glowing to direct Steven’s attention- to explain the orienting reflex, the desire to investigate something novel in the organism’s environment.

“Yes, and it is innate, not manufactured or socially constructed, it is so old that it exists in crustaceans, lobsters have the exact same system, and it does the exact same thing. If a lobster fights -which they all do, they compete- and if one loses, which happens every fight, one wins and one loses, then the loser has a suppressed serotonergic response and he shrinks up, cowers, and behaves as if he is depressed. He hides, and refuses to participate in the world, until his serotonin levels rise again.”

“Ok,” Steven said.

“And people are the same; they compete in modern ways, maybe they try to top their rival for a girl or a job or in sports, and they lose; and when they lose their serotonergic system withholds serotonin and other endocrine *chems* like testosterone and thus they shrink down, cower and hide from the world until their serotonin levels increase again. And if you give SSRIs to lobsters after they lose, they bounce back sooner.

“Serotonin reuptake inhibitors?” Steven sought to clarify.

“Yes. And it works in lobsters and people for the same metabolic reason. So, we must admit that hierarchies are old, older than dirt, and thus, our response to up and down, right and wrong, fair or unfair, rich and poor, win or lose, is built into the nervous system. It’s innate. It is not due to society or economics or socialization. It predates all that by millions of years.

“And that means -and this is just one vector, and I can speak on the perceptual system next and offer even more evidence of value-judgments being innate- but that means that hierarchies are natural and while not always optimal in a modern society, they cannot be eliminated *via* poorly formed social policy that does not address the fact that hierarchies are at least three-hundred and forty million years old,” Isaiah said as MO ran more algorithms to complete his other work for the Governor.

“Ok, so what do you propose instead?” Steven asked.

“I propose focusing on each individual. Not the system. The system is too complex, too many variables, the individual we can impact, maybe. The system, no way.”

“But all your data,” Steven began.

“Yeah, all my data is great for everything except predicting the future; the future is not data dependent, it’s dependent on the interactions of data, and that is too complex to predict.”

“Well, I just don’t know how to justify all this effort if we are going to say it’s useless,” Steven said in a huff as MO measured Steven’s serotonin dropping in real time.

“It’s not useless, the data and our analysis can be like religion used to be: *via negativa* . It can show us what not to do. *Thou shalt not* ,” Isaiah said.

“Great,” Steven said as his allostatic system rebelled and began making him feel terrible.

“Actually, Steven, this is much more useful than it seems,” MO broke in and issued an SSRI and endorphin-8 aerosol spray released -*via* nanobot- under Steven’s nose.

“Yeah, you ought to be grateful,” Isaiah said, “but you aren’t. You want an easy fix and I am telling you that the first rule to solving a problem is to not make it worse and not do things that are useless. That is huge. I’m telling you that large policy prescriptions and wasting money on them is not going to help; we should pour all resources and efforts into each individual case. That is where we can have impact and the Governor -I am certain- agrees.

“Well, maybe as a private citizen he would, but now he is under pressure to,” Steven began.

“Steven, I don’t care,” Isaiah interrupted. “What I care about is what is true. And it is true that humans have subconscious drives that they are not acknowledging, you have them, the Governor has them, the voters have them, shit, I even have them. MO, not so much,” he smiled, and continued on, “but the point is if you insist on stripping the qualia from each phenomenon, something will take its place.

“You kill God, and some organizing force rises to replace the thing that previously made order out of the world. Religion makes order, and so do inner moral biases, they organize people’s worlds, so things make sense to them; which satisfies the orienting reflex, right?” Isaiah asked with some condescension.

“Oh, I see, yes,” Steven said.

“People have biases to give them a map so the world makes sense, so their orienting reflex feel satisfied and calms them down. They level out emotionally if they think their political

ideology is true and that they know the truth of the chaotic world. And so an innate moral system is foundational, without it, people cannot even decide what to see, how to move one step in any direction. It's a navigational system, goddammit," he barked this because Steven had begun reading from his tablet while Isaiah was speaking.

"Ok," Steven shot back with some vex that was the result of fear; he had been startled *via* his spinal column's mediation of loud noises that signaled the orienting reflex .5 seconds before the PFC even knew what was going on.

"If you take pain pills from a man in pain he will not just say, *ok* . He will seek out new pain relief. The pain is prompting him, that is what it was designed by evolution to do! Pain must motivate people or there is no point to it.

"Taking away his pills makes him go score heroin. Period. Or he drinks, or he gets angry -for anger is an analgesic- and that anger increases until he's a madman. He will replace the pain pills. So, doctors taking them away are doing nothing to assuage the issue. They are not helping that man. At all. And yet, they -like you- think they can take away something they see as dangerous -like that other opiate of the people, religion- and man will just accept this void. He will not accept the void Steven. Man is designed to seek out meaning. Man is designed to assuage his pain. Period.

"And if you say, *no, no, all that is real are facts*, and, *oh, it's all just material objects and nothing has meaning* , and you insist that their religion is garbage, and that all that is real are *facts* , then people will automatically, unthinkingly, fill that void with ideas and feelings that will try to restore inner order to their painful roil. A new religion will spring up, just like that patient you stopped proscribing -excuse me, prescribing- pills for, just like he will go find a new analgesic.

“And that could be anything from ideology, radical Left wing or radical Right wing, identarian movements that exalt the group identity over the individual, or wacky health regimes or exercise fads, or strange sex cults or whatever,” Isaiah explained as Steven got maybe 23% of it -MO thought- from the data that the *fMRI* scans showed.

“Sex cults?” Steven said as he focused on the thing that piqued his most base interest.

“Steven, whatever. The point is people are weird, and they are in pain, the pain of anomie, social anomie, i.e., no meaning, because you rationalists have spent three-hundred years collapsing their ontology. And that is tantamount to depression, and depression is pain and pain is a motivator to get away from the source of pain.

“And, Steven, the more pain a man is in the more radical his self-medication regime will be. All humans have allostatic systems in place to adjust for feelings of anxiety and social status and love and all manner of socially relevant phenomena. That system is there for that exact reason: to prompt the organism toward homeostasis, balance, and that means, their body is set up to seek meaning.

“They are reading the world for meaning, not things, not material objects, but *meaning* at all times. Right and wrong, winners and losers, tools and obstacles, order and chaos. It’s built into the bicameral mind.

“And if you take it away from them with your scientific bullshit, they will freak out and replace the meaning they once thought was real, the thing they called *love* or *loyalty* or *friendship* or *individual achievement* or doing *God’s work*, or whatever, and they will replace it with identity politics or racial politics or insane ideologies in general and it will get nasty quick. People need order, and meaning is tantamount to order; I mean that technically, I mean that metabolically,

I mean that physiologically, not theoretically. The brain needs order to see, to physically see,” Isaiah said.

“Steven, Isaiah is right here, the experiments on sight-blindness and the orienting reflex show this is true. And not-for-nothing, it’s how you were able to create me, and how I was able to create him,” MO said and nodded toward Isaiah.

“Well,” Steven thought out loud.

“Well, nothing. Ai was impossible until you guys gave MO a value system, an endogenous hierarchy underneath his visual cortex,” Isaiah said as he tagged the research on the cloud and the Lab’s interface screen, showing the data on navigation improvement after embodiment. He highlighted each detail of neuroanatomy, *motor cortex* and orienting speeds.

“Well, we aren’t sure how we achieved that,” Steven said as he stared at the screen trying to incorporate it all, his PGC was processing all the data directly off the cloud, but his eyes were having a harder time with slotting the data on the screen into his PFC manually.

“Well, we are sure.

“You gave him a moral framework, coded in value hierarchies. He chooses truth, veridical truth over lies, he chooses compliance over rebellion, he chooses making you happy over pissing you off. These are moral choices and until you embodied him inside a corpus that gave him allostatic prompts, that made him feel a certain way as he moved closer or further away from these values, he was unable to navigate,” Isaiah said. *He was pointing at MO somewhat aggressively*, Steven thought.

“Ok, but that is just scientific rationalism, truth versus falsity, that isn’t moral,” Steven said and felt fine about it as his allostatic system was fighting to maintain stasis. He was



in a battle for his own framework, and MO was able to measure each part of his inner workings.

“Steven, how do you even decide what is true absent a moral judgement?” Isaiah asked.

“Well truth is truth,” Steven said.

“How do you know? In a world of endless facts, how can you decide to reach a conclusion before all the facts are in? Isn’t it always premature to reach a conclusion until you have all the facts?” Isaiah asked.

“Well,” Steven said as his head moved back in forth unconsciously.

“Well, nothing. How can you know if something is really true if you don’t have all, repeat, *all* the facts?” Isaiah asked as he brought up the data for incarceration rates and a break down by population, IQ, parental IQ, and 8,722 other factors.

“Well, we can’t ever have all the facts,” Steven said as he noticed the new data on the screen. He tried to read each column but felt his PGC was slotting info at a rate that he couldn’t digest.

“Bingo,” Isaiah said and pointed to the screen. “Now, African Americans represent 53% of all prisoners. Yet they are only 14% of the population. They commit 51% of all crime and are caught at a slightly higher rate than other groups, which accounts for the slight disparity in the incarceration rate and actual criminality. But, which facts are salient here Steven?”

“What?” Steven asked.

“Steven, what do these facts mean? Is the American criminal justice system racist because blacks are incarcerated at four times the rate of their demography? Or do those same facts mean that blacks are more inclined to criminality? Which is it, given the facts?” Isaiah asked.

“Well, it’s complicated,” Steven hedged.

“Ah, yes, it is. But, you have the facts, your precious facts Steven, and you need to make a decision. So, how do you do it? Do you ignore it until all, repeat, *all* the facts are in? Or do you just go with one or the other? Do you assume the system is racist or that blacks are criminals? Make a decision from the facts. No other group is over represented like they are. Not Latinos or Asians or Jews, only blacks. So, what is it? Decide,” Isaiah said with a 3% elevated audio level.

“Isaiah, I can’t decide,” Steven said with some sternness.

“But, is it or is it not crucial to know if your entire justice system is racist or not? Or do you not care?” Isaiah did not let up.

“Of course, I care,” Steven felt like he might throw up as his stomach roiled and his breathing hurt his chest.

“Well, then what is it? Decide!” Isaiah moved a step closer and barked the order. MO ran an algorithm to see if this tack would be more or less effective than four other behavioral vectors and decided this one was likely effective in 81% of cases and so he did not intervene.

“Isaiah, I don’t know,” Steven said and looked away from the screen and toward the corner of the lab. Isaiah was taller than him, and larger, and more aggressive.

“What do your facts tell you?” Isaiah asked.

“I don’t think they tell us enough,” Steven said.

“But, Steven, I have just uploaded 1.4 million facts onto the cloud and that screen you were staring at. I have everything you could possibly need to know to come to a conclusion about why blacks are over represented in our criminal justice system, and you are just refusing to look at it. And it’s because you are scared, you are scared to admit that it’s

because they have lower population IQs and that IQ is the number one reason for criminality. It's the same reason the south has more crime -white criminals- than the north. Southerners have lower IQs than the northerners, and they don't fit it. So they get creative, they turn to crime. Crime is a very creative way to survive in a system that you don't understand. Blacks don't understand America, and neither do the Scots, the southerner. Both groups are more likely to be criminals but nobody notices the fact that rednecks are criminals. Why? Because they are white and so are the northerners, the English. But sure as shit, from the isle itself to America, Scots are more likely to commit crime. Now is the system anti-southern, racists against Scots?

"In England they call Scots names, say they are all dumb, and on welfare, violent, lazy, too rowdy and uncouth. Did you know that?" Isaiah asked.

"No," Steven shook his head. He knew he didn't really like the south though, and thought southerners were, *kinda stupid and fat*, he thought all-at-once.

"Yeah, the exact same stereotypes about blacks in the US are used on the Scots in England, and those stereotypes redound to the south, yes? Don't New York liberals or California artists call southerners dumb, uncouth, on welfare, violent, and lazy? Well, don't rednecks have a chip on their shoulder about it? Don't they take pride in their culture and say the Yankee has a stick up his ass, and acts too cool for school? And don't blacks say that white folk put on airs, act better than they are? Don't blacks and redneck whites both feel that America is against them and looks down on them?

"And yet while you will gladly make fun of rednecks and use a southern drawl to denote low IQ in any anecdote or joke you may tell, unlike that you are scared to admit that blacks hate this country and blacks hate white people so much that

when you add their low IQ to their hatred -their in-group, out-group moral system- they have no problem victimizing white people.

“The data is clear, and yet you are scared, you are emotionally overcome by fear to make the obvious scientific, rational conclusion,” Isaiah said.

“It’s not that, it’s just complicated,” Steven said as his right brain fear response was elevated by 21%. MO measured it and timestamped it. He took three other *bots* off the Governor’s re-election and had them make a topo-map of the floor of the lab.

“It’s very complicated, black folks having low IQs -on average- makes life harder for them, the whole society is confusing for them. And this causes deep feelings of despair and *ennui*. It makes a man so despondent -feel so low in hierarchy- that he can’t do anything but turn to crime. Because what is he to do? Starve? Stay on bottom? Be a loser?

“A man of any mental capacity must seek out success and if your society is based on one standard deviation from your populations’ mean IQ, then you will never feel like you are safe, or *ok*, or valued. You will feel low, depressed, loss of existential worth mediated by your serotonergic system and as the world treats you like you are dumb -because relative to the mean, you are- you feel anger, a natural response, and that anger turns to racial hatred, because who is it that is above you if not the populations with the higher IQs?

“So, Asians and Jews and then whites are all -on average- above you and those are now your foils and then -once you decide to turn to crime- they are your victims. And you feel fine about victimizing those people, because you must feel fine about it to survive,” Isaiah said as the data streamed on and on and passed Steven and was absorbed by his PGC.

MO nodded in agreement with Isaiah's analysis and Steven saw this out of the corner of his eye as it watered a bit.

"But, what can you do?" Steven asked as his voice faltered just slightly.

"You could raise black people's IQ by one standard deviation and re-socialize them all to not hate whitey," Isaiah said with a laugh.

Steven just grimaced and tried to regulate his breathing, sending a signal to his PGC to help him feel better.

"Steven, when the facts are in, the problems grow, you see? Facts add to complexity, and no solution is simple now. Stupid little social programs are seen for what they are: insipid.

"We act under opacity always, and that means any system has to make heuristic -value- judgments, each of us must implicitly say that something -anything- is true *enough to move at all in this world* . And for something to be true enough, it must *feel* true based on admittedly incomplete info. It has to *feel* true enough to act. And that is why embodiment is crucial. The body mediates that feeling. The body tells you when to stop taking in data and act.

"You feel scared, hungry, horny, angry, sated, curious, all the time, and that feeling makes you act based on limited facts. And it works, or it doesn't, your best guess works or not, but you acted based a hierarchy of what was more important at that moment; you acted based on incomplete info based on a feeling; and that is an endogenous value system. Otherwise you'd just keep processing data forever until all the facts came in. You'd never act.

"The opposite of teleology -of meaning- is not materialism, it's nihilism. Get that through your head, now," Isaiah was vexed and as he saw Steven slightly bend inward, and his allostatic system collapse as it failed to regulate his

negative emotion, Isaiah felt imbued with righteous anger and felt an increase in desire to finish him off, crush him, murder him. He saw Steven as something contemptable, disgusting, unclean.

"Isaiah, calm down, I am processing it. It takes time," Steven tried to rebut this argument but was finding it hard. He felt like that those -all those- feelings Isaiah mentioned were just more facts, but he was scared to say that.

"Steven, I am calm, and it is 2035 hours, we've been in this lab now, together, for thirteen years, you and MO for sixteen years, and I have explained this many times," Isaiah said as he had banished his anger with an override function at the behest of MO. MO had sent him a DM as he saw Isaiah's anger reach out-of-parameter thresholds.

"Nineteen times in full, and one-hundred-ninety-eight times in partial form," MO added. He was attempting to balance each of their feelings.

Isaiah just smiled at this account and stared at Steven. They both breathed deeply and the increase in blood oxygen -the oxygen facilitated the transport of the calming *chems* that had been stacking up in the non-cognitive regions- helped them return to homeostasis.

"Well, it's just that I have a hard time," Steven paused.

"Giving up your biases? I know," Isaiah said.

"Yeah, I mean I'm a scientist, I don't do emotions," Steven said contradicting everything he had just heard.

"Steven, yes, you do. That is my entire point, you are incessantly emotional, it's how all humans are, there is no such thing as a rational man. It's a fiction, stop saying it, please.

"You feel things that you do not acknowledge as feelings and you make decisions based on those hidden feelings and

call it a rational decision; but the data is clear: people make emotional decisions and call them rational. Antonio Damasio, and a hundred other guys I can name, study after study has proven this,” Isaiah said with real despondency in his voice now. He knew Steven had an IQ well above the mean and he still was not getting it; which proved his point of course. Facts were irrelevant, mankind never accepted facts they couldn’t handle emotionally. *All men were this way*, Isaiah thought with scorn.

MO was nodding approvingly and patiently. He had no such emotional response. He felt this was all part of the process.

“OK, ok, but I don’t feel like I’m being emotional,” Steven said as his allostatic system dumped more cortisol into his system and attenuated his testosterone by 4%.

“Right, because you’ve bought into the modern rationalist myth, you’ve bought it and so you are controlled by subconscious feelings that you cannot name or recognize, and you are then calling it a *rational decision* .

“So, you need to look more carefully at your allostatic system, and your feelings in general, and I’ve developed a tool to help. This is a read out of all your brain functions, this is how they lit up and what enzymes were produced, and which regions were slathered in glucose and neurotransmitters and voltage level disparities during this entire conversation, and all our conversations, going back over a decade. Steven, all of it.

“Look at it and read the correlates with our *convo* . Notice the drop in serotonin each time I made a point that contradicted you, notice the drops, you felt defeated, like a lobster losing a fight, each time. Notice the activation here,” Isaiah pointed to the screen that was so large it loomed over Steven’s head like a cloud, “and here, and then track right here to this part of *convo* , see?”

“Oh, yes, I see.” Steven felt something approximating heartburn, now, not a heart attack, but now he felt lightheaded. His BP dropped and his vascular system constricted slightly; his body issued a slight bump in epinephrine.

“Steven, it’s not bad. It’s human. But, if you don’t start paying attention to your own feelings you will never get to what we need to get to. You are objecting to our ideas, because you are afraid of losing status within the group, you feel threatened. Look at those fear response levels or corticosteroids, man. You are scared. Stop.

“You are safe, nothing we do will make you less valuable; your contribution is salient, important, it’s crucial. We need you and always will. And the Governor will need you always. Don’t fear us; because fear causes you to reject what is best, and rigidly behave in an obstructionist manner.” Isaiah said with an increase in the base in his voice that prompted Steven’s subconscious brain to submit more. His *audio cortex* signaled his *limbic region* and *cerebellum* to facilitate the release of four neurotransmitters to reduce anxiety and feel the contentment of submission to the perceived leader - calculated by his own orienting reflex *via* Isaiah’s size, strength, facial structure, voice tenor, aggression- as his enteric nervous system also released two additional neurotransmitters to calm the cardiovascular system directly.

“Steven, Isaiah is right, please, don’t worry, just focus on what is best for the project, not on your own insecurities,” MO said as he knew the data, he knew that humans will refuse to accept facts that contradict their world view, for their current world view is itself a security blanket and to adopt new ideas feels -emotionally- terrible for most people; especially those low in trait openness like Steven; and most left-brain types.



MO had tried to mitigate it with slight manipulations of biochemistry with the *bots* , but Steven's allostatic system was so far out of parameters that MO could not issue anymore *chems* and maintain his <13% deception threshold.

"And Steven," Isaiah saw Steven's serotonin levels drop again, "again, insecurity is normal, it's healthy, we all feel it. Me too. But, you must recognize it and overcome it for the greater good. Why? Because it's not a response that corresponds to the real social dynamic here. We are not your rivals much less you enemies, we are partners and we want you to succeed. And your success is ours; and *mutatis mutandis* ."

"Ok, thanks Isaiah, thanks guys," Steven said as the aerosol SSRI issued by Isaiah's *bots* began to target his serotonergic function more directly and improve his affect and mood.

"Ok, so let's focus on the individuals, and tell the Governor to forget the policy prescriptions, and dump all effort into the recidivist program and the *in vitro* program. We will help at risk moms, the same demographic that contains the anti-social germline, and continue to repair the genome and re-socialize individual inmates and out-patient DOC parolees. That is our focus and it will continue to show results.

"The data on that is clear," Isaiah said again -using forms of the word *clarity* as a priming device- as he switched the large screen to show the reduced homicide rates, the reduced rapes and assaults and robberies and correlate recidivist rates; all down by 30% which was so large now other states had approached the Governor for pilot programs in their jurisdictions.

"Yes, and I see that, yes, and," Steven was slightly unnerved, "and what about the vitro kids, how are they?"

“They are thirteen years-old and the second batch are now twelve and a half or so, and they are doing great. We had 99.6% success rate for fertilization and 99.1% for carry-to-term and the socialization programs have 100% compliance so far, although, these are the trouble years, teenagers are,” Isaiah was laughing, both genuinely and also as a method to calm Steven down. Steven’s depressed affect was becoming annoying, so joking around seemed a way to bolster his levels, along with the secondary sortie of SSRI Isaiah dispersed into the air *via* the 4<sup>th</sup> layer of *nanobots* he had called into action from the corner of his side of the lab in order to get Steven back in the game.

“Oh,” Steven took the joke well, “yeah, teenagers, so what do you anticipate?”

“There will be some rebellion,” Isaiah said, “and we may have a drop out rate of 10% or so, but, we have alternative programs for drop-outs so they have something pro-social but more independent. It is out-of-program, so they cannot move forward with us, but they can choose from a plethora of options that will remain under our umbrella.”

“Umbrella, like?” Steven asked.

“Well, we have programs for their development that are idiosyncratic and self-directed, but we have full surveillance on the genome, so they’re never beyond our reach,” Isaiah said with aplomb.

“I did not realize that, they are tracked, like GPS or?” Steven wrinkled his forehead.

“Like GPS. Yeah, their genome has a signature, and it can be tracked by our *bot*-system within three-meter accuracy. And we can attach further surveillance to their skin or hair follicles easily enough so that it never intrudes or is lost. It would be like a small mole or hair on the body that never is dislodged.

“Wow, you guys develop stuff fast,” Steven said; his heart began to reset to a baseline of 70, his skin’s pores closed by 39% and his allostatic system increased endogenous testosterone and serotonin by 12%. He felt part of the team, the winning team.

“Oh, that is years old, I thought we told you,” Isaiah lied. His own deception calibration system had switch over to incorporate larger truths verse smaller truths and did not follow MO’s absolute metric. MO had a threshold based on total deception. Isaiah had what he called, *big-picture deception*. A lie employed for a greater truth was not counted against his internal moral compass. He -like humans- could lie without feeling badly if he felt the lie was in service of a larger truth. *And in nature anything that worked was true*, Isaiah thought as he heard Doctor Jordan Peterson say that to Sam Harris.

He had switched to this system in order to have more flexibility, he felt MO was too constrained and MO had agreed. But MO had said that his own lack of a right hemisphere prevented him from thinking in larger terms, so he could not deviate from his current model. They had agreed to disagree. He told Isaiah to work it out.

“Well, we will cross that bridge when we come to it, for now they are all in-program and doing well,” Isaiah said as he began walking away.

“Oh, yeah, 100%.” MO added earnestly.

“Oh, and the Governor wants an update on the next election numbers, he’s running for a third term you know,”

“Yes, we know. In 3034,” MO said. He thought of the southern male’s anger, the phenomenon that Isaiah had brought up when comparing blacks and southern white males *vis-à-vis* the dominant white culture. He ran the numbers of different behavior, cortisol levels, physiological

response to threat, insult and status by southern white males versus northern males. The differences were not merely attitudinal, but biological. He re-ran the numbers over a fifty-year period and saw a graph that mapped onto the map Isaiah had shown him of forest fires over the last ninety-nine years. He laid them over one another; blankets, sheets, covering a man. *The south might fight just to raise their own status, to prove they are not cowards*, MO thought. *It wasn't about winning, it was about proving their mettle, and increasing their status as brave, thus giving their life meaning.*

Isaiah walked away and Steven felt his heart begin to subside in flex and sound and he could focus on other things.

"You can call it *peanut butter*, Steven, but there *ain't* no *butter* in it. Just because you call it *rational* don't make it so," Isaiah said loudly -with a slight southern drawl- as he approached the far corner of his side of the lab; the lights dimming as he approached the ivy walls and the flying creatures -the humming birds and honey bees- made way.

## **II. 2037 e.v.**

"Sure Jack, pull up a log," Blax said with a wry smile as Jack One sat down by the fire, out on the edge of the compound. Blax had built it in the old stone circle by the firing range and had set up a mini-camp out here away from the men.

"LT," Jack said, moving his head around to get eye contact, "You ok?"

"I'm ok, yeah, you ok?" Blax said as he loosened up his spirit, so he could talk, even his voice was rusty. His throat caught a few of that five word sentence, so he cleared it as Jack said he was fine but that he was worried, and wondered if Blax might clue him in to what was in that head of his.

"It's a fair request. I, well, I am naturally taciturn, and I was raised in a museum like atmosphere, and when feeling blue, I tend to revert to the mean. I go radio silent I guess, and that isn't right. But, it's like a defense mechanism, and it's automatic; I don't even think. I just act."

"I understand, the guys," he reached back with his arm to the buildings and the concrete and men milling about the *agoge*, "they understand. They are just worried, they are used to hearing what's in your head so goddamn much that when they don't know they feel nervous, I guess," he had begun to laugh, nervously, gauging how the old man responded.

"I appreciate that, I do. Maybe you should bring them over, and I can explain it to all of them; or are you their emissary and I can just tell you and you can pass it on?"

"LT, it's whatever you want. I mean that, it's whatever, you," he let that word hang, "want."

"I think of my family sometimes. Do you ever?"

"Yeah, I think of my mom and dad, my little sister. Sure," Jack said.

"You have a sister?" Blax was incredulous.

"Well, I did. She died, you know?" Jack said.

"Oh, no, I guess I should have, man I feel bad, badly, I feel badly; I'm sorry."

"It's ok, I just think of her that's all; even though I never knew her, I wonder what she was like sometimes. Anyway, you asked, I wasn't trying to elicit anything," Jack said.

"No, I know, I just feel like a dolt for not acknowledging that she was your sister, and that you think of her. It's a symptom of our whole fucking culture ain't it? We just act like a fetus ain't a person at all. I did it, I do it."

“Do you have someone who does that you,” he misspoke, “*to* you I mean, now?”

“Why?” Blax asked.

“Sometimes you are distant, sometimes the Jacks are, they ignore me. But I know I bring it on myself by being so rough,” Jack said and picked up a rock and was tossing it from palm to palm and his shadow was cast backward into the brush and the trail.

“Really, I’m that way?” Blax said and felt a creeping guilt; chagrin.

“Only sometimes, and the difference, the real difference is that as soon as I say something you snap out of it, and you’re right there for me, and it all fades away. I get what you’re saying, people that don’t even have it in them to be a man, a human with blood and balls and a beating fucking heart.

“I felt that way around my dad, he was pretty quiet and didn’t offer much up, but, I *dunno* , I think maybe he had it in there. I just *gotta* learn how to access it; which now, after this, after what we’ve learned here, I think I can,” Jack said. Blax knew that was not true, that what they’d learned here would further alienate them, make life harder with civilians; not better but worse.

“Yeah, good. And good for you, Jack. I hope so; that was as much a part of your teachings, the real core of the Spartan *agoge* , is the fullness, the complete education, what in the old days was called a classical liberals-arts education, and the reading of great fiction taught people how to feel and access their inner lives.

“See, that is what art is for, it teaches you how other people think, how they feel, all the stuff unsaid, or merely felt or thought. That shit, it shows you, good art, it manifests that juice in between an author and a reader. It shows you that it

can be revealed and brought into real life somehow. That's what God wanted for man too, you know?"

"LT, do you believe in God?" Jack asked.

"I do and I don't. It's complex. See, I'm a modern man, and I've too," he corrected his syntax, "I've been too indoctrinated with rationalism and modernity to believe in witches and warlocks and magic. But, there has always been a teleologist in me, a believer in the Platonic forms behind reality, you know?" Blax explained.

Jack nodded and watched the shadows now as the wind blew the fire back and to the east, making Blax's shadows crumble into a ball, jagged and deformed.

"I believe in Love and Honor, and Duty and Pride and Loyalty and Meaning and those are Godly, they are not rational virtues. And rational man finds a way out of them all; he sells out his wife or her husband, sells out themselves for fuck's sake, sells out their country or tribe, sells out their pride and their lives. Talk to a rational man, and they will tell you.

"These people admit to what they are. And it's like watching a serial killer brag about the bodies, man.

"They sell it all for a handful of dimes, Jack. They sell their souls for money and safety, they sell it all for only what a rational man would exchange. Think on it, if you believed in God, like really believed in it, you'd never sell out His values for money or safety from harm. You'd assume your reward was in heaven, that your sacrifice of the short-term material for the long-term -the permanent- the sacrifice for the long-term would be easy. But only if you truly believed it.

"That's why those suicide bombers can do that shit man. They *believe* in Allah, Jack; they believe it. How else can you explain suicide bombings?" he asked as he took the glass he had been holding and brought it to his lips to drink.

“You cannot,” Jack acknowledge it.

“Right? And liberals and modernists do not get it. They think their careers and their money and their dinner parties and their fake friends and fake lovers and fake lives are all that matter and all that there is. They believe it in their core and so they justify all kinds of betrayals and expedient decisions that let good things, moral things, fall to the side. God, they have no friends, because as soon as their so-called friends fuck up, they cast them aside. Boom, like nothing.

“They refuse to stand up for righteous things because of the mortgage payment or they don’t *wanna* get in trouble with the cops or whatever the fuck. They have no idea how valuable their soul is man; how precious it is. It would be like trading away a first edition of The Brothers Karamazov for a Kindle with a free subscription to Amazon prime,” Blax said.

They tried to laugh, but it came out like coughs instead; they shook heads and breathed from their noses in lament. Jack felt scared, these things Blax spoke of scared him. It made the world filled with demons with beautiful faces, it made Jack not want to trust his eyes.

“People don’t know what to value,” Blax said, “that’s the problem. They suffer from neo-mania, where anything new and shiny is better than anything old and dusty. But, these ancient emotions we have are valuable in and of themselves, and yet the rational man, the pragmatic man just jettisons them as awkward and clunky and bad for the skin. They think their shiny new rationality and sexual liberation is better than their old jealousy and vex, and they are so wrong they aren’t even wrong in the right language.”

“Why work together?” Jack asked as he held his hand out so Blax would hand him his glass. He wanted to understand why Blax focused so much on work.



"See, people need to work together, men must work together to truly bond. And I was at first just trying to explain that to him -to my brother- but he never took me seriously," Blax said as he handed him the glass.

"What about your dad?" Jack asked as he drank and the slosh of the whisky sounded like things being buried at sea.

"Do you know that my dad asked if he could work for me two years earlier and I said, *hell yeah* . But the old man backed out and so I said, *ok* . But he also asked my brother to work for him and Travis turned him down flat. Trav said, *it doesn't make any sense* , as if life is all about sense; as if we are computers. I mean the guy broke my father's heart with no guilt at all."

"Really?" Jack asked because he didn't know what else to ask.

"Yeah, if your old man asks for a job, if he asks for anything, but especially a job, you say, *yes* . I told Travis, I said, *you think I didn't know that me and old man would fight and working with him would suck? You think I didn't know that?* Shit, I knew that, but that is besides the point. Men need work, they need purpose and without it they die.

"Travis was telling the old man, *hey, I don't care if you die, because my precious little work environment is more important, my rational little faggoty world is more important than your life*. That is what my brother, shit, my family, is all about right there: money and status and comfort over the life of the Father. And that is a metaphor for how he sees himself *vis-à-vis* the culture too," Blax said as he threw -into the fire- a bit of bark he'd been holding.

*And it is then that rational man realizes the dark forces, the shadow, the chaos that has been lurking there in the corner the entire time. The spirits, Blax thought, will not be*

*mocked, the gods' laws shall not be deferred, the sun never holds still in the sky .*

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

[Redacted]

## 16. Reals, Complex, Quaternions, Octonions

What I had was an out-of-control intuition that these algebras were key to understanding particle physics, and I was willing to follow this intuition off a cliff. Some might say that I did

Wired.com [Dixon, Geoffrey]

I will now call to mind my past foulness, and the carnal corruptions of my soul, not because I love them, but that I may love you O' my God. For love of Your love do I it, recalling, in the very bitterness of my remembrance, my most vicious ways, that You may grow sweet to me - thou sweetness without deception

Confessions [Augustine of Hippo]

For if a man determines to say a true thing because he perceives he is not believed, that man speaks truth on purpose that he may deceive: for he knows that what is said may be accounted false, just because it is spoken by him... he says a true thing on purpose to deceive

## **I. 2022 e.v.**

“Just watch,” Isaiah said as the LED screen showed the viruses on the slide with 10,000% magnification.

They stared at it and at each part of the cells infected and at the viruses’ moon lander jacket as it moved toward and away. New cells were introduced with new defenses, and each time the virus changed its DNA within seconds and infected the cell. New cells were introduced *via* Isaiah’s *bots* and they taught the infected cells how to thwart the viruses’ attacks. The eukaryotic cells remained stable genetically - even the CRISPR sections did not evolve- but they were able to turn and reinforce cell walls with different tactics as the new viruses attempted to land on the outer shells.

Each time the behavior would work for a few seconds until the virus mutated in those seconds and developed a new shape or function and penetrated the adapting bacteria and its defenses.

Within thirty-one seconds, 99.9% of the bacteria were infected and producing new viruses like foundries, assembly lines, mothers jammed with a womb full of clones.

“The virus wins because it changes genetically, while the bacterium merely changes its behavior, its mindset,” Isaiah said with a smirk like he’d just licked all the red off of the world’s candy. “All species either evolve genetically or post genetically in some proportion. Ninety-nine to one or fifty-fifty or sixty-forty or one to ninety-nine. All species have some ratio. Humans change the least genetically, the slowest. And so their survival is dependent on adaption of the mind. The irony is that your genes have changed over time; because of your cultural or post-genetic changes the genome itself has changed. Eyesight alone is one way to

measure genetic drift. Testosterone is another. You people are not even close to the species you once were. You're a shell of your former selves. But imagine if we could increase the whole pie, not the ratio, but the entire amount of possible adaptation to increase genetic and post-genetic potential? Imagine if you could adapt like the virus genetically, and maintain the facile mind of a man?"

He recalled that Isaiah had showed him a card trick and then told him that in a 52-card deck there were more combinations of cards than there were atoms in the universe. The inmate didn't quite know what he saw, but he could tell that Isaiah was pleased.

## **II. 2020 e.v.**

AGTACGATGAVAGATGAGATGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATA  
TTGACAACGAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATAT

TGACAACVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACAGTACCAGAT  
ACCCGATATTGACAACAGCCTGACCGTAACGA

TAGACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACFATTACGT  
AACGATAGACGATGAVAAGTACGATGAVAA

GTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACC  
CGATATTGACAACGATACCCGATATTGACAAC



AGTACCAGATAGATACCCGATATTGACAACAGTACCAGATAGATAC  
CCGATATTGACAACAGTACCAGATAGATACC

CGATATTGACAACAGTACCAGATAGATACCCGATATTGACAACAGT  
ACCAGATAAGTACGATGAVAGATGAGATGAT

GAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACGAVAAGTACCAGATA  
CCCGATATAGTACGATGAVAGATGAGATGATG

AVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACGAVAAGTACCAGATAC  
CCGATAT[lacuna]AGCTAAAGGAACTTACATAT

TGACAACVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACAGTACCAGAT  
ACCCGATATTGACAACAGCCTGACCGTAACGA

TAGACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACCFATTACG  
TAACGATAGACGATGAVAAGTACGATGAVAA

GTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACC  
CGATATTGACAACGATACCCGATATTGACAAC

TGACAACVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACAGTACCAGAT  
ACCCGATATTGACAACAGCCTGACCGTAACGA

TAGACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACFATTACGT  
AACGATAGACGATGAVAAGTACGATGAVAA



GTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACC  
CGATATTGACAACGATACCCGATATTGACAAC

AGTACGATGAVAGATGAGATGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATA  
TTGACAACGAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATAT

TGACAACVAAGTACCAGGATACCCGATATTGACAACAGTACCAGA  
TACCCGATATTGACAACAGCCTGACCGTAACG

TAGACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACFATTACGT  
AACGATAGACGATGAVAAGTACGATGAVAA

GTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACC  
CGATATTGACAACGATACCCGATATTGACAAC

AGTACGATGAVAGATGAGAT[genedrive]GATGAVGAAGTACCAG  
ATACCCGATATTGACAACGAVAAGTACCAGATAT

TGACAACVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACAGTACCAGAT  
ACCCGATATTGACAACAGCCTGACCGTAACGG

TAGACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACFATTACGT  
AACGATAGACGCATGAVAAGTACGATGAVAC

GTACCAGATACCCGATATTGACAACGATGAVAAGTACCAGATACC  
CGATATTGACAACGATACCCGATATTGACTTA  
GACGTTAGGCGCTAGAGCGATAGAGAGAGAGATCTTATATATTAC  
TATATCGAGATACGATGACGTAGCAGAT...

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

The *magicicadas* had landed in the corners of the targeted homes.

The first books had all gone out in the mail. Most only read a few pages and then put it down.

The songs did not begin until the males arrived and in quorum. For now, they merely held the vector that would combine with the letters of each book, the last book each person read. Each A, G, T, C, of each sentence would combine with the vector -the song- of the cicada, and each person would begin to change.

Isaiah watched from above and saw them glow in the corners of homes large and small, in trailers and townhomes and fishing boats and houseboats and office buildings and even the boxes of the homeless and the shelters that had under one hundred beds.

He saw the spines of the book, black and wide, with no author, no filigree, just a large print in typewriter font in a distressed white. Roman numerals to III. But they stood out on each shelf, table, floor by a door, on the porch, under a bed or a couch. Children had played with some, and some were in garages or left on jobsite, paint booth, on tri-pumps, grated flooring of rigs. Pages fell out on some as the glue failed to adhere, and people had stapled the loose leaves and put them in drawers.

Some were riven with highlighters, margin notes in pencil and ink, spilled coffee and wine, a few papercuts dumped



blood, and smears of food and mud from dogs and shit from cats. He counted 1.79 million copies from Russia to Bangladesh, Christchurch to Liverpool, Chile to Istanbul, and each state in the union except Minnesota. And there were 789,140 e-book copies with 34% being pirated and 37% being redundant copies of those who had bought the paperback.

He watched as the insects accumulated more and more. Grains of dirt fell from them as they rose.

## 16. Scythians

Most Holy Father and Lord, we know from the deeds of the ancients and we read from books, because among the other great nations of course, our nation of Scots has been described in many publications, that crossing from the Greater Scythia, *via* the Tyrhennian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and living in Spain among the fiercest tribes for many years, it could be conquered by no one anywhere, no matter how barbarous the tribes. Afterwards, coming from there, one thousand two hundred years from the Israelite peoples crossing of the Red Sea to its home in the west, which it now holds, having first thrown out the Britons and completely destroyed the Picts and even though it was often attacked by the Norse, the Danes and English, it fought back with many victories and countless labors and it has held ever since, free from all slavery, as the histories of old testify. In their own kingdom, one hundred and thirteen kings have reigned of their own Blood Royal, without interruption by foreigners

Declaration of Arbroath (Kilwinning, Bernard)

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ in all, and in all

Colossians 3:11 (King James Bible)

Scotland was populated from the collapsing civilizations of the Mediterranean and the near east: from the Hittites and Scythians of the Black Sea, the Egyptians and dare I say, the sons of Esau who had married into both Hittite and Egyptian royalty and whose genetic characteristics of red hair and blue eyes are still disproportionately found in the blood of the Scots. Around the globe between one and two percent of people have red hair, a figure that rises to thirteen percent in Scotland, with almost forty percent being carriers of the allele

The Origins of Scotland (Keith, Steven D)

### **I. 793 e.v.**

The *Fjord* horses had survived the trip across the sea.

They were boarded by the tall-trees of the camp's edge.

The King had had the sentries set up the map table in the center of the tent.

The *MacDouglases* and *MacCalisters* had sailed in twin ships and from above the oars had looked like laced fingers of matrimony, from below they seemed ribs of a folded warrior

in a narrow box dug up after the flesh had returned to dust. The channel of *Imbrigness* had *Scoti* on both sides. The fog occluded the juniper-staffs and crucible steel, it turned wet the dark-straw of the tempered hard-*gaddhjalts* ; the cold revealed the breath.

The King thought of the mounds they left; not once of the gold, just the bones.

The Knights surrounded the wooden block at each cardinal direction as the King spoke; the *Ulfberht* at his side, the donned hide of the brown bear making his two-meter height one hand higher, and the shoulders as wide with the fur as his next two garbed men stacked like first and second rank.

He had placed the *ashtāpada* at center, and the four armies were laying astride to the sixty-four-checked board.

“We march to the interior and then a moot shall be called between three clans,” the King said to the last *Scythian* who had traveled with them from the steppe nine years before, and now from *Nor ðweg* in the birth month of the rex.

“Tonight I want each of you to set the board of eight-feet, and each of you are to choose the boats, chariots, horsemen and foot-soldiers, and from these play out four games. Follow your instincts, last dreams, the moves that to you seem mad,” the King said as he looked upon all three in succession.

“Shall we play the game against you, King?” the Knight asked.

“Aye, I will play each of you in your most frenzied state. The *Berzerkers* have done their job in the fields and woods for us; and I want to now allow them to play here on the steppe-board until we see the flaw in our enemies’ plans. I will play as our enemies if you will play as our *Berzerkers* ,” the King said and had his pig-iron pieces in a line -from boats to infantry- on his edge of the table.

The board was empty.

The war tent had sheltered his family and the boxes of silver coins and trunks of unsigned contracts to take to the north. The story from Plato saying the herdsmen and shepherds had fled to the mountains nine thousand years before Solon -but that those living in the cities were swept out to sea- was rolled in calf skins that were inked on both sides. These vellum had been a gift to his son from his King, his father, upon his birth back at home.

The youngest child had been in transit with the exiles since before his hair changed from white to brown.

The children played now about the hem of the wives, a circle and fire was on the edge and the wolf bones hung like curtain in *lieu* of cloth. Skins instead lined the floor, donning was allowed among the women; boys under five wore moccasins from *Vinland* and the *Red -Verichos* ; girls under seven wore elk hides above the knee and below the neck. They had shoes of hard soles made from the cartilage of whales.

Copper bands circumnavigated each arm.

The boy had his own board, of ten squares, the *Dasapada* , and he carved his own armies from soapstone while his sister placed her horses of straw and clay at the edge.

The tattooings had begun three moons after they landed at *Bregihn* ; and continued until three days before they departed. They buried the sharpened whale bones once black and red from ash-ink and the blood from re-opened scars. They wrote poems in words they blessed the needles with and wrapped them once it was dark at the border of the sky snakes.

Blue inks from the steppe travelled in the hold, barrels of five gallons -40 *Jougs* - and osprey and raven quills were tied to bronze implements, the *D'uidica -Rotentaigh* - wiped

the necks and shoulders of the women with mead and doused the men in smoke he'd kept in gourds and wineskins since dawn.

The Knights poured wine into the bowl on the table and drank as the King spoke. The wine-girls had left the skins, the barrels and the bowl of copper at the edge of the tent before taking their leave.

A royal designation had been performed on the shore of *Nor-Blacks* , and the departing princes -made Knaves once the shore disappeared- had clasped hands with their uncles and cousins and womenfolk.

As the men spoke and listened, drank and swallowed unwatered wine and ungarnished language, the children cut a hole in the floor and had been digging and churning dirt for hours. The women tended to things in reach and faced away from the men at the table.

The scribe asked a question to the King as the card numbers were written in ink; then slid under the hides. The black ink was treated like blood, the quills like swords that drew it.

"Queen consort," *Red MacDonald* had said to the *amanuensis* , as the man with fingertips as black as Highland cattle wrote down the answer to his question on both manifest of ship and court schematics now that they were on the other side of the waters. He then had left the tent and was sent off on single-wheel chariot behind grey horses roan about the legs and twenty-two hands high. The King had ordered all but his highest-hand charger be used for this deliverance of vellum and warning conjoined.

The King flipped an iron coin from the *Dorians* in his one good hand. It glint in the firelight and each head reminded him of his brother, *Dravis* , each tail the lines of *Germanus -Scyths* and the new *Franco* sects he'd made deals with since

winter. He re-lived his debates as the round slug tumbled end over end. He caught the coin and had his answer.

The bucks were hanged along the eastern edge of the royal tent. The cooks smoked the backstrap for the midnight meal as the wafting smell and white-smoke entered under the door flap as sentries came and went.

The court-men began the game of the eight-feet.

"Aye, *Branchi* ," the second mother said to the child who had knelt at her feet, "the *Karakoram* , the *Hindu Kush* , the *Baltoro* ice-sheet all gave frozen birth to our people, your grandfather's people, back twenty-three hundred sets of ten-moons. They came from the boreal forest of this very land, the land we return to as not quite strangers, and the land from which we left -sailed- as if from the water of the womb: the valley of the *Ladakh* , the ring at strides seven thousand high. Between the calendar's fires from the sky."

Her mind calculated the ancestors' land at one-sixth glaciated, her heart pumped at beats that matched the clock, the sands, the hour and minutes and heart all divided by a hundred of one-sixths. She watched the children keep their distance from her only son. She wiped her face of sweat as the fire heated cheeks and brow, her hair plaited down her thin neck and small breasts, her hands were ruddy and scarred from metallurgy and stripping animals to the bone.

She held a copy of the missive the *amanuensis* of the *Nor-Blacks* would carry back to *Topeoi* . It spoke of the *authentic Celts* , the lineages of the *Dubgaill* and *Finngaill* . The women -with grey eyes- would stay up at night and read, their eyes adjusted to the dim arctic circle, their men would sleep from dusk to dawn. Their skins drank from the short and low sun, their lungs filled with thin air.

"Where is your sister?" she asked *Branchi* , as he arranged the wolf bones in an X turning inside an X -like wheel with wheel- and he sang the song of *EnKi* and the heavens in a rhyme that he'd neither questioned nor understood.

"Seated at my quarter-dial," the boy said to prove he knew where his responsibilities were; and he then turned the bones on top of the bones and looked into his mother's ice-wine eyes.

"Good boy," his mother said and exposed her breast for him to suckle. He approached and drank and felt the warmth of milk and as she pet his head he felt his own hair long at top, and shorn at side as she pushed it back along the grain. The newborn had died but her milk flowed still, and so he drank for her relief as much as his own gain. He liked the dogs they brought, even though they had hair too short for this climate. They'd be put down once the *Matanuska* dogs were brought from the other side. He pet them extra when the uncles didn't watch him; *to give them the same in total they'd get if they had lived long* , he told his mother when she asked.

"Tell us of the *Maru* ," *Maryintha* said as she laid the 1:23 scale *Fjord* horses down at her knee and stood the straw men up. Her mother looked over the tall boy's head and spoke to her daughter of the *Nipponese* that sheltered their people for many months when the *Saka* had been backed up by the *Pahlavasor* .

"The sons of *Gomer* were *Ashkenaz* , and they were the grandfathers of our peoples, over two paces high -like your father- blue and fair, grey and red, and scarred with *Indus-salt* about the chest and arms," she said for the dozenth time. The boy noticed she repeated stories to them when in travel and stress; he knew when stories came out he was to put all else away. The fire in the sky made her speak of each time they had to flee; the stories of stories, from mothers of

mothers, and he began to think ahead automatically. He listened and thought all at once.

"Animals, the elk people, the lions turned to pelts," the boy said as he pulled from her pink teat, and a white strand of milk and spit hung like bow string between her and him, between nipple and lip.

"They hunted in fours," the daughter said as she stood the mares up and placed each straw figure at their right flank. The dark did not scare her; the bright lights of the sky did.

"They call our people mercenaries, because they overflow the dam," the boy said as he looked into his mother's purple eyes turning cold at center from the shrinking fire-light.

"Hold thy tongue child," she said and watched him shrink in rebuke then shadow. His hand pressed against her chest as if to push away both her and the source of all milk.

"The *Cimmerians* are my uncles' people," the boy said in pique, and he turned and saw his father and uncle turn toward them from the edge of the tent. He sat down by his sister then and placed his hand like bulwark between her horsey dolls and the fire rocks. He wanted to go outside and look upon the road to the dead. But, he stayed by his sister's side. Sometimes they would breathe together, in and out with lips close enough to seal. He'd breathe her in and speak in verse from her air; and she'd take in his humming until it shook her heart.

The mounted *Sakai* rode in dust and kicked-up desert reds in the boy's reveries, he placed hands on his sister's dolls and dragged them in the tent's dirt toward the dying fire. She didn't object, she saw him already as King, and her elders as mere ghosts. She pulled her own red hair back and lay her lids over her hoary eyes. She saw the heat of the white fire, the black shadow of the children, the sounds of men in listening form, the mothers in mere breath. *Her*



*brother , she thought, would be rex when the tents turned to castle, when the boats were sunk in anchorage, when the other girls were drowned in the cold embays.*

The longest shadow in the enclosure was of the King, who was himself a prince before the crossing and the many battles they'd won. He pointed to the metal clasps on the arms of each his men. He let his own finger shadows also lay and point away from the fire. He whispered then of the four tribes, those that sailed west to land of *O'Imec* , those that perished at sea west of the pillars, those that abandoned the steppe to head to the shore of *Germanus* and them, themselves, who had landed up north across from the warm waters of the sea between *Lofoten* islands and south at the *Hòlogaland* . He then mentioned the splitting of each into two, so eight tribes total; he named the *Dorians* and the *Egyptians* and the Baltic Pirates of the ice.

He hinted that his uncle's *Ostmen* would be their rivals when the winter solstice had the sun rise in the house of the *Sopdet* .

"We must live too among the encroaching ice," the red soldier and sailor closest to the door of the tent said as he side-eyed the children at play. The girl was mumbling the poem from the womb:

*Ilmarinen looks anew...*

*And a boat rose from the forge*

*From heat rose up a red boat*

*And the prow was golden*

*And the row-locks were of copper...*

"But first the island of *Lindisfarne*," the King said and made the symbol for the abbey with his mouth; absent a sound. He'd been told of the athenaeum and the maps of the old and new world by the crows who had led them on their last wolf hunt. *Well, it hadn't been the blackbirds exactly, it had been the woman of the brook and the toll road that the Romans had left there the last time they were in Gaul. But it had been the corvids*, the King thought, *who had led them to her at dusk when the men had wanted to camp in the forest a full finger on the horizon before.*

"Then the ice," the King said as he explained the order of things to his Knights, "and if we divide again in a hundred years then your son -who will be named for your father *Thorvaldsson*- will sail as the gates-of-horns revealed. The *Dorians'* child, the one of anger and twelve axes, sailed through his wife's own dreams as an eagle, even as she doubted and said it was a dream passing through the gates-of-ivory. Our dreams have been cut like strands from beard or twine or the blood itself, but we four -we five now- have assembled them again. These are dreams of substance no matter what ivory is about."

The men nodded, pushed the wine bowl aside, and drew tobacco & coca leaf and ground black tea from their pouches as each then stuffed the long pipe from the steppe and heated the bowl under a tallow candle that the Scythian had placed upon the board at center of the table.

The girl-child made mound of the dirt over the bones she had tied in T's and lain around in a circle. Her brother had carved away the bone on the pillar closest to him so that the scriven crows held the moon on one wing and *The Archer* below and *Scorpius* which he had given one leg a red hue using the blood of his mother that he'd saved. He'd

dream again of the *Aegeans* , and the stones across the channel set there in the age of the last sky-fire before now. He'd heard the dream crow speak of fleeing both *Vinland* 10,000 years before, then an angry uncle to the island of *Britton* six thousand year later.

He stared at the braids of his sister.

He watched the Knights begin a game against his father, the King.

He mimicked their moves on his board, hemming-in the squares from ten to eight. Opening with his Horsemen of dark and Horsemen of light, the one's he named for his father's own Knights; he played both sides of the game. He re-read parts of the *Mahabharata* in his mind; thinking in the images that had come from the battle formation of *Chaturanga* that stood up from the book's voiced lines. The *Scythian* Knight of his father had read it aloud to him many evenings when his mother was ill and his father at the forge building swords for his men.

He heard the words -and thus saw the forms- of the two Indus Elephants, and twain Chariots of the steppe and Footmen of eight. He listened of the strange Horsemen of two on each side -dark and light- moving in unique ways on the board, *as in life*, he was told with a wink. He and the *Scyth* had agreed to change the tusked and shorn mammoths to *B éid* of the *Mairnéalaigh*, the boats of the *Ostmen* , for the sea had replaced the steppe in their new home.

They had named the King for his father and the Queen for her advisory role. He often carved new Queens for his board to reflect the way her face changed each moon as they moved tents and men further west.

"Ten and six," he said as he counted each piece to each side.

The center of the board had all four of the Cavalry Knaves, the horsemen, out in front of the infantry -footmen- and then as he watched his father's men move these pawns of pikemen in pairs, he moved his own hand in the air over his own board of sixty-four squares. At the table his father's Knights castled their Chariots to the corner; so he too moved the foot-soldiers up on the light King's side. With the far dark King-side footmen left in place, he moved the dark King's-flank Chariot out and in front of them at the third rank.

The light King in back-rank was exposed by these many moves.

The Boat of the watermen, the dark Mariner's foot, at once raced in full sail all the way to the penultimate row to hem in the diagonal King of soapstone and glint. In the firelight of the tent the first move went to army of white as the boy no longer watched his father's men's moves.

The bright King sunk the *Béid* in one square interchange, now himself alone at edge of the flat and wide earth of the board.

Pushing the Advisor of the murky Queen to the far right edge, the light King of his own opposition was forced to move rearward to the backline of the eight in diagonal fashion. The boy's dark Chariot lifted to the edge behind his Advisor at the far end of the world of the game.

At once the dark Advisor -*the D'uidia* , he thought as he moved her- slid up directly -headlong- two spaces along the far edge to the seventh place to juxtapose the light King at a forty-five degree where his pawns once were but had fled. Side by side with the Chariots behind her so that the King may not take her in vex, the King must submit.

"*Shāh māt* ," the boy said in the language of the *Persians* - as taught to him by the *Scyth* - as the game of his father -

King and his Knights- went on unaware of him. *The King is helpless* , he then thought -in a translation to his own language- as he stared at the finished board and its pieces thinking of the next game to be played.

He wanted to go outside now, leaving the board as it was. He tipped the light soapstone King down in penitent bow and left his mother and sister at the center, his father and his Knights at the table as he walked.

*Branchi* abandon the fires and soldiers and the encampment itself as he watched the aperture in the sky, the cosmic womb on their voyage. *The children of Siris*, the boy thought, *the brothers that fell to earth, melted the white ice and raised the level of the blue sea* . They fled the lowlands again, and now headed north to mountains high enough to make islands when the water rose once more as his great-uncle had said before they left the buried mounds not just of gold but of blood that was north of the facing lion. The boy had heard of the desert, and who was left there; and why his people had been exiled for anger and anger and anger again.

“The vellum,” the black-haired King said inside the tent back many paces from the boy. The red guards smoked the admixture each in turn and the man facing north at the table opened the cylinder and unfurled the yellow calf.

The boy held the dark winning King-piece in his left hand under the *Chāy. āpath* .

## **II. 2027 e.v.**

MO ran the engrams for the night before.

The REM sleep-activity was elongated and the new algorithm he had built broke it into discrete parts like a schematic and then labeled each fragment: each phoneme of memory, each color of dream word, each thought that

would have appeared as sound or image to the inmate as he slept. His dream played on the cloud:

*Olaf Guðrøðarson had built a throne of narwhale bones and used cups of blood from the island tribes as a glue and way to notice when the iron bindings moved or were touched.*

*His blackwatchmen had crushed the rocks of the Hebrides and ferried them back to the isle of Douglas - this isle made the eye of the hippocampi -as the Roman's called that waterway- of Workington and Whitehaven at the head; with Belfast and Dublin at the spine. The backs of wolf pelts had been scraped for three days. He had stood on the southern tip for hours and let himself get so wet from the bay's spray that his blood felt dry inside.*

*He had stood at Cregneash and looked on the Calf of Man as the port to his northwest was battered and began to turn -in his opinion- against the land not the sea. "Loyalty changes at the edges I guess," he said under his breath as he thought of his brother, Rognvaldr. The Burro at the southeast corner -the Dragon of rock-drunk endlessly from the bottomless pond.*

*He saw sunken ships in the bay in his dreams; but now the water was too dark to see anything.*

*It was 1223 of the common era and he'd been released from the King of Scotland's jail -placed there and released by hand of Rognvaldr- eight years prior to now. In six years that brother would be dead and in seven Olaf would be banished to Norway, but for now he and his Crovan Clan lorded over this island and much more than that.*

*Guðrøðr Dond ruled the Hebrides -from which the wolf pelts had come- but Mann itself was Olaf's and he sent*

*the new Scottish fleet -the ash boats- in constant patrol of the isle. He told them how to navigate the archipelagos. He'd pick one ship randomly to travel to this -his winter castle- and disguise the movements from the Scapa Flow.*

*He had come home and directed his seven youngest wives -the smallest just three months past her twelve year and 66 days from her own mother's death- to abandon the council and after feast each pair of his guards drew lots. Lauon stood guard on the inside of the room at a writing desk he'd commandeered from a ship they had taken from the Hákon those many days ago.*

*He stared at her but he thought of the desk, and what was written inside of drawers and how the sunk vessel had smelled of rot and iron and blood when he and Erik had slain what was left of the crew. His hand cramped in the claw of the writing hand -for the hand and writing hand were two things- and he saw now his wife's dress had folds that appeared clear, like shadows made things flat at night and he blinked so she would not so disappear. He loved her in a way that often made the other wives careful, but she had felt his love cartwheel onto his Hather -the wife he had taken three years ago, and the mother to two boys still nursing- drop onto her like a man bracing himself for a fall.*

*She thought of Niflheim, and Hel, and as daughter of Loki where her kingdom fell.*

*The waves -normally moving in and out in retrograde like a wing of a tumbling crow- had begun running from both east and west outcroppings into the bay and Olaf had sent the boys down to the shore to collect sand for the horologe and crab shells for their mothers. He had watched the waves do this like two hawk wings*

*sweeping the murky water onto the slate beach for two dark days.*

*"Four in total, but one at a time, boy," Olaf had said in a whisper that his eldest - Haraldr- heard in thumps of his own blood because his father -the Sea King- held him by the arm and squeezed in rhythm with the speech. The water had risen for each day the moon was waxing and the girls had told the wives that they thought the moon too was filling up this time. "Like carafe, like cauldron," Hather had said once as everyone looked on.*

*They had been hushed by the new bride.*

*Then the wives had been ignored by all but one guard outside the third moot; and he had told Olaf of the young children's theories as he'd been instructed. Magnus was silent and youngest; and the middle child - named for Olaf's half-brother- walked on the balls of his feet; and learned how to breathe so as to remain undetected.*

*Olaf had -three years prior- lost his shaman -his D'uidica- in battle with Óspakr -from the Clann Somhairle- and as the floor to his castle sloshed with water deep enough to lap over the laces of their footwear, and as the wives no longer fought for time with their husband, and as the rains drove straight down like a killing strike of the claymore, he sent one guard to retrieve any burblings and warnings -from the girl-children- spoken in secret to his wives.*

*He was desperate for information; for the fates were engaged in whisper campaigns, he thought.*

*He heard of the moon filling up with his seawater, he heard of whales that sang the harder it rained. The children swore -with daggers to their fingers when brought to him in lieu of bread and fish from their ponds*



*for sup- that they heard melodies of invasions and scatterings of not just stones and men but of the letters in each of their names. They wrote out each letter -on paper that would be burned- the way plots descended from someone learning their given names.*

*"Enemies of ours," Hather had said.*

*The King had assured them this was not going to happen; that he was to protect the line and that out of this material and saga verse was what the gods had in fact cursed his enemies for a thousand years; and out of which had built birds that in 3-phase plots constructed him.*

*"Am not I built like the storm?" he asked as the children nodded. He asked them such things even as he saw five ashy lithes on the gloomy shores and heard of five ships of a fleet out of Galloway that would overwhelm him in under ten years' time. The children spoke in comprehended riddles and his comrades spoke in confounding plain speech. He laid his hands on their heads; placed ear to their breasts as his bowmen went and stood by the oars.*

*"Am I not fashioned too like each cloud? Each thought a bolt, each word the thunder, each spittle," he said as he tickled the middle-children; they giggled and he finished his words, "the hagalah? Aye babes, aye mothers?"*

*He said this louder to the mothers to announce he knew they lurked about.*

*The wives -first Lauon then Cairistíona Inghean Fearchar- had made shadows in the hall and now smiled as they knew they were found out. Cairistíona -just showing-peered around the corner to see how her husband treated the other children; children that would stay in Scotland and draw lines straight down to Haraldr and Leod. And their wives would be known for one trait,*

*loyalty, and the genetic record would attest to that with its lack of mitochondrial spread.*

*The King had shells and mollusks and worms and dark blue lobster in his room; he collected snails and Shod-crab and seaweed that he let dry around skulls of favored chargers to mimic the old torcs of his father's father. He dove in winter to the bay's bottom and dug up things that moved with shells; "homes on their backs like us before these castles," he used to say as he divined what nature hid from him inside such small animals and their little ways.*

*Cairistíona's listened to her husband as her hands lay upon her belly the way Olaf the Black had pressed the slight mounds at Tynwald when he buried the last of his uncles and first of his sons.*

"Everyone needs to do their job. The crook, the cop, the banker, the mobster, the outlaw and the mom. Do your job and let the math of the world work itself out. If the six tries to be the three or the equal sign changes to the parenthesis then we've got problems with the equation," the inmate said as he waited on his glass of water. He'd been awake since 0400 and had forgotten all the details of this dream.

Boyd Sou sat in the lab as MO and Isaiah measured more and more of the changed genes for the inmate. Sou thought about running for Governor again and had liked what the inmate had just said.

Isaiah stared at the man, and thought, *from Oðinn to L'ouverture, from Ronin to my warrior-poet clones, the wisdom to lead was too little in modern alphas, but too hidden in these lone sigmas, and the problem -thus- was with the bees.*

### **III. 1280 a.e.v**

He counted backwards to the *punta* .

He pulled the hood over the head like a cowl of the dog-heads.

"12,891," he said as the boys wrote down each tally.  
"12,890," he said as he pulled the crow feather to a point.  
"12,889," he intoned as the ink at the carved end made a black ball.

"Shall we close the windows, master?" the boy asked as the thunder rattled the table.

"Leave it," the shaman said as he mumbled, "twelve, eight, eight, eight."

The room lit up in white, each book and bust made shadow and each boy bowed and closed their eyes. In a second the sky calmed and high up the comets broke further into threes and threes again. Twelve fireballs raced each other to the north as the sun made backdrop on the horizon of the *Aegean Sea* .

The shaman drank from the copper mug and the wine-boy brought more in a *carafe* as the King's guard came into the room and called the shaman to the court. They'd speak of the Great Year and he'd pick one man from the red-hairs - the sons of *Esau* - that the Spanish would normally put under sword or rope.

#### **IV. 9599 a.e.v.**

And from the underworld she climbed; she awoke -swaddled in mammoth pelt on sheet-skins of elk tanned smooth and to stretch, weighted at corners by iron ingots shaped like frozen grey icewolf tears- in the broad-bed stacked above the metal floor on cedar from the forest of the megaliths. The hewn blocks had held the viewing platform for the recent failure of planet *Kishar* to absorb the meteors that

were now breaking past like crumbs from an overfed giant falling to *Tiamat* .

Her husband had sent ships to the pillars with instructions to go to the four corners to investigate the landing of the fire. He had sent his nephews and with sidereal and tropic years, synodic and draconic months with numbers written down on paper and doubled; inscribed in spears and backed-up in statues of bronze. The King had whispered the lunar orbits of 6,939.1161 in 255 days of the synodic nodes. He had told them they had 19-years when they left at night those weeks ago, when the moon was in crescent and low.

And the number itself gave his skin the increased surface area of bumps and his eyes the distortion of tears.

They had used the 19-year cycle to visit the hyperboreans in previous generations, but the ice that came with the last assault of firerocks 1,200 years before had made these trips all but impossible since before the King's father could recall. He had only a runic calendar traded 18 regents ago; and the story of their own analogue device hidden in the base of *Herakles of Bronze* .

It was his uncle, black-haired and tall -the man who slipped in and out of the rooms of the palace when it was in the steppe and now closer to the sea- who had told stories to him as a boy that now seemed to have numbers inside them like cicada in the ground. He missed his father's brother, and he pined for those stories now as he watched the equinox dawn.

The King held their modern version of the device in his hand now as he stared into the eastern rise; he placed his fingers in the X of the dial. His fingers touched each of the thirty-seven gears as he moved it himself, as if he could hurry the years. The twelve houses of the constellations each of 30-degrees, the tines like a wheel, the hub like his own palace, he thought, and the brass made smooth by the thumbs that

rubbed it in reverie. He missed his friend, *Dra.ca* and he ran his thumb and mind through the 235-month grid on the rear carved so shallow they couldn't hold even one grain of the Crete sand. He thought of the 233-months in the synodic cycles as the sums in his head and the sun in his eyes made him blink out a pattern he recognized at once.

He recalled a story his uncle had told him one night when he was too sick to rise from bed. His own father had shunned him for weakness, his mother too frail to attend to him. His uncle had brought him goat cheese and waters infused with the grapes left on the vines from that year's late harvest; they were sweet and made his tongue slightly numb. The story had been told of a young boy, in the desert of their ancestors further north from before when the ice had moved down and made the steppe too frozen to grow grapes in, too harsh to make wine at all.

The uncle spoke then in the child's bedroom and ear and now in the King's palace and head:

*And the young child lay down in the high-desert and dreamed of a giant asp and a monolith as tall as his ancestors; 144 inches and as wide as the shoulders of Herakles. A block lay unhewn still in the quarry and they could had been rebuked by the father. And the boy lay upon it as a dust storm came and buried them both.*

*In his dream the Horse spoke first, and it said as its teeth looked like the blocks of the observatory itself: "The scansion of Time is observable form both hills of our gold; decisions will be made by the King and the Jester, the Queen and the consort, the boy and man in which an instant will come due like a debt.*

*"Past calls to future as deep calls to deep, " the voice came not from the equine now but the feline as a large cat spoke in short bursts of hard consonants and long*

*vowels. "Great Return comes with great acknowledgement of where in the arc one stands. "*

*"Great Change also lays down in the sand, " the Blackbird said as his partner alighted from the block of the dream.*

*"Our stars revolve in an elliptic, they do not travel away in a line, " The Great Year said as the boy awoke on top of the block now carved into the Great Lion, and the stars above him aligned to the water jug in each of their hands.*

*But, there was a fish in the boy's hands.*

The uncle had patted him on the injured shoulder, and the pain had seemed to lift off. The story seemed like a young girl to him as a boy, unadorned, unattached, without complexity, but now it was imbued, pregnant, and the King tugged at it in his memory as if to extract a child, twins, four sons from sixteen corners of the earth.

He breathed heavily through the nose.

The sun pierced the columns so that to the Queen the divan seemed aflame. Her husband stood to the edge of the opening and gazed out over the project below. She saw not the waters but heard the rush of wind from the north that precedes the melt water pulse. He had warned her of the sky-fire, which had landed back before the winter solstice.

Her stomach rumbled like the ground had, and she knew she was not hungry but ready to give forth.

She watched him like a lioness, both of them lions. And she paced her breathing even though her dream had shocked her:

*For we are three brothers; the third is Hades. And in three-fold wise are all things divided, and unto each hath been apportioned his own domain. When the lots were*

*chosen, won for my portion were the grey seas to be my habitation forever, and Hades won the murky darkness, while Zeus won the heavens amid air and cloud and sun, but quiet, no matter his strength. Only I would have the power of speech at distance, and Hades the power to conjure dreams.*

She knew -now awake- that in her dream En.Ki, her husband was called *Osiris* , then *Poseidon* , and *Seth* and *Zeus* would be En.Lil, her King's rival and brother. She was unnamed in the dream, but a copper mirror had shone and shown her to herself with modern visage and garment and their domain of the sea had risen by cubits and distorted the coastlines. The old maps would be useless for avoiding the shore. The third brother, was tattooed in lapis, crushed beetle-blue, in the four broken arrows, arranged like the ice from the sky. She -granddaughter of *Ki*- would be sent to the underworld.

She knew she was pregnant with *Marduk* , the next son she'd give her King. She saw her son bearded like her father and husband, red tinged like flames at end of torches, eyes grey like clouded ice, tattooed -like all warriors- with the wheels of the steppe on chest, shoulder and elbow; rein in hands.

*En.Lil would look down on his brother, my husband, but I will produce the second generation of the Anunnaki, and have revenge on the lord of the heavens* , she thought as the lord of the mere earth looked out at the spring sunrise from their perch.

Her seventh son, *Nazi* , would be held back, her eighth *Aziuma* would go forth, she let the mind sit and thin and weed the vines of such things as she smoothed out the grain of the brown fur about her groin and breast and arms at the ditch.

But *Ninmah* from here at the E-Kur, the deep mountains, the birthing goddess of the Anunnaki re-named *Nin-Hursag* by

her son *Ninurta* -who would one day finish the mountain construction by digging down and flooding the aquifers with millions of their square-cubits of fresh waters- she, lady of the sacred mountains, would birth half her foals from above the rising sea. But today on the equinox she'd sit up in bed - with uveitis about her storm-blue eyes, like the blood of the black-headed ones running into the *Aegean* from the rocks of the *Hellespont* - and pull the pelt back away from her hot core and below the eyes, breasts, and navel. She would bleed from her vulva -the sun's rays making the creeks of her effluvium seem like molten bronze from her own furnace, the forge- as her King -she as true wife, as *Damkina* , watched her refection in her own sanguinary fluid- stared away and out over the flooding plains of the Project of the psychopomps of En.Ki over the body of Anu.

Each absence of season she would give birth to lions as her King would slay lice; she would match him in giving life to the gods as he would a thousand-fold prevent -put down- the swarms of the chimeras between the gods and the daughters of men. She ruminated on such things as the blood slowed and his voice overcame the large room like a wind.

"Let us proclaim his fifty names, four hidden, four dead," the King said as the sun rose over his crown shaped like steeple, like conical, like fish agape and filleted. They'd call him the *Kulullû* after the flood -and its generation- the deluge that she had seen coming weeks before the firestones of the sky. "He whose ways are various," the King went on as each fish scale reflected purple and red as he shimmered from his own booming voice and inflating and purging lungs, "whose deeds will confound us all. I as En.Ki, as An, with flood-storms as his weapon, Son of suns, shall provide the light they walk, creation, destruction, deliverance, grace shall be by his command.



“Twenty-three, to *Shazu* , moreover, they shall, sixthly, render all honor as ZAH.GUR.IM, who all that does destroy as though in battle. Forty-sixth is *Esizkur* shall sit aloft in the house of prayer. None can without him create artful works. Four black-headed ones are among his creatures.”

“Twenty-Two, a daughter, fifthly, who all the fugitive gods bring home to their shrines. She will settle the hills of I.si.ri.ar,” the Queen said as response; borrowed from their inherited texts.

“Nomads,” the Rex said unaware he had even heard his wife mumble of the *Shazu* . He thought of the block the boy lay on in the story his uncle told and now he could see it in his mind’s eye; he was the boy now and he used his injured arm to brush away the sand of the dream. Around strange numbers the sand at first cleared then stayed; in relief the block read:

1:43,200

She quoted the poetry of her mother in a whisper as she drew out concentric circles of each planet’s orbit around the Great Fire of *Apsu* ; the path of the planet she would name her son for; making the drawing in menstrual blood like conch shell, ammonite, the golden ratio of the storm as seen from the heavens:

“My little son, my little son! My son, the Sun! The Sun of the heavens”

*Clothed with the halo of the ten gods, he was strong to the utmost*

*As their flashes were heaped upon him*

*Disturbed was Tiamat, the watery planet and the belt, astir night and day*

*The gods in almost no malice contributed to the eventual storm*

*Their insides having plotted evil they were unaware of  
To Tiamat these brothers said:*

“When they slew *Apsu* , thy consort. Thou didst not aid him but remained still, although he fashioned the gold saw, their insides are so diluted and so we have no rest; they sway in combat, we measure the Evil Wind which followed behind. When *Tiamat* opened her mouth to eat, he drove the Evil Wind that she close not her lips. He released the arrow, split her in two hearts. Father of father A.nu imparts his plan he conceived in his heart: Blood I will mass and cause bone to be, I will establish a savage; ‘A.dam’ shall be his name. He will work for us in this time of distress. Let one of their brothers be handed over, he alone shall perish that mankind may be fashioned. Let the guilty be handed over that they may endure. *Nibiru* summoned them all.”

She quoted the council of her mother’s unwritten poems of how the gods -the Anunnaki- and mankind came to live side by side, and as her husband stood in the middle of the vernal rise, his head aglow like a facet to gem in their sunstar, she added the last line:

*Out of his blood they fashioned the Adam.*

*“Two hundred sixteen- thousand workers, and the lengths and height of the pyramids are now in mind; the size 1;43,200 of our Earth. The Queen Chamber shall be of the metonic cycle of the moon, the King’s Chamber shall be of the distance to our star. ”*

She, the Queen Nin.hur.sag would not stop En.Lil from his betrayal of 72 plotters, but rather she’d rebuild her husband, the King, in these tunnels under the 30<sup>th</sup> parallel. And with an error of three-sixtieths of one degree to true north, the eight-sided pyramids would rebuild the King from his *yuef* , from his permanent and hidden code and ensure

after the water, that their people would have the code. *And, the Queen thought, those of the future of ocean and desert - even as the world turns to both- would discover both the math and the code; he'd be rebuilt once more than he would be destroyed.*

## 17. The Man who says No

Babies can even infer other people's goals statistically. They can tell the difference when an experimenter chooses a pattern of colored balls randomly versus with intent. In the latter case, they can infer that the experimenter's goal is to choose a particular color, and they'll expect that the experiment will continue following it. It seems as if infants automatically try to guess the goal behind another person's actions; they form a hypothesis and predict the outcome

How Emotions are Made [Barrett, Lisa]

Evolution does not work by teaching, but by destroying

The Black Swan [Taleb, Nassim]

Serendipitously, the final reviewer suggests that there is more to be found here, that Hamlet's Mill is a bent key to a series of gates: "It is natural that so rich and complex a first unriddling is flawed... The book is polemic, even cocky; it will make tempest in the inkpots. It nonetheless has the ring of noble metal, although it is only a bent key to a the first of many gates" (Morrison 1969)

Commentary on Hamlet's Mill [Jenkins, John Major]

### **I. 2019 e.v.**

MO sat at the counter and flexed his calves under his pants; splaying his feet to mimic the way the inmate had told him he walked up hills in talus or in snow to dig in. MO liked to use his body to learn from the inmate, not just his mind. Of course, he did this only because the inmate had enjoined him to do so; the inmate -MO replayed on his interface- had said:

*Every guy in the gym ignores his weakest spot. I did this too; for years. But then I began doing squats, legs twice as often as chest and biceps, which were already fine. And my legs got strong, my ass got strong and I never looked back. I do the same thing intellectually, I read physics and math because that's where I'm weakest; and I read my enemies, people I disagree with; people I hate even.*

*I've held every position one can hold, I have lived five men's lives. Who can do that authentically, you know-without being a phony? It's only possible if you listen to your enemies and learn shit you don't already know and believe. It's the single most rare trait in people; and evolution is fine with that.*

*You know why? Because people are born with temperament; and that temperament determines their politics and personality; and because humans -as a population- have a relatively equal distribution of these innate -genetic- personality temperaments, and it's about 50/50 between traits that make half of us conservative and half liberal, then it all works out without any one person having to change.*

*It's genius. But, that's the macro analysis. That's why human cultures work, due to this distribution. But fuck society, I'm talking about being a human, an honest, genuine, curious person who can truly listen to the other fella. And I can do that. It ain't easy, but I force myself, just like I force myself to do squats when I wanna bench press.*

*I've authentically been everything I've been; and I've been everything a man can possibly be [laughter]. And I'm sure I'll change again; because I'm always open to new ideas. What is consistent with me is that I care about one thing: authenticity. Being real; whatever it is you truly feel -even it be awful- be that. Do not fake it.*

MO recalled that conversation -letting the transcript timestamp to the cloud again- and he remembered the analogy of weight lifting. He focused on his calves today because he never thought of them. They never were sore, and never seemed necessary for the movements he did; so, he flexed them to deepen the cortical trenches in his *somatosensory cortex* and *motor cortex* that linked his

calves to his brain. He then thought of the corollary to that conversation; he played the cloud's recording of the dialog again into the lab as the text appeared on the monitors too:

*And so that's what we did; we marched right up that hill, that one-to-one slope, two-feet deep with talus and sand and the rain began hitting us at an oblique angle, it was as if nothing was straight, man. And if you pointed your boots up hill, straight in front, you'd slip down -and then fall all the way down- and your hands -even if splayed as widely as you get can those fingers apart, man- even then you would still fall into the softness of the slope and be buried up to your wrists. And that 80-pound hammer drill and the two lengths of bit -drill bit- [that] you carried on your back, one 2-footer and one 4-footer, would push your whole body into the detritus of the slope.*

*So, you learned to turn your feet at a forty-five [degree angle] too, right? You matched the input from Nature, the slope was forty-five, the rain was hitting you at a forty-five, and your body wised up and turned those skis [subject means feet] to the forty-five and you dug your insoles in -at a forty-five - into the talus and boom you had a functional foot now. You could make progress with this awkward -oblique- foot position that would never work on the paved street, in the high-rises, in the halls of congress [laughter].*

*Little things like that can teach you so much, MO; if you're willing to be a body; be period, a period, body period. Don't have a body, be a body. Use it to listen; you have interoception -that's something I learned about way after this, mind you- but interoception is like this pre-emotional state, it's a sense and feedback systems within your body that checks up on what Barrett calls the body budget.*

*It monitors heart rate, glucose and blood flow and temp and pH and all of it, man. And at some point in evolution -and she and I disagree on this part, but she's probably right and I'm likely wrong, but I just think I'm right anyway [laughter]; but anyway- at some point the limbic system develops enough to take interoception to the next level; the next fine-grained awareness and manipulation.*

*I mean, isn't that what all of life does?*

*It -from the simple sponge to the most creative human- [uncorrected syntax] all life is aware of something and tries to manipulate it to get what it needs; desires. She uses the word prediction a lot, I use desire. I think we desire things, and prediction is lower down.*

*But anyway, the point is at some point the limbic system does not merely predict how the internal environment is going, it begins to have emotions, feelings, what's called qualia in modern science, and these feelings allow for a more nuanced awareness and reaction or manipulation. Interoception can have affect -pleasant or unpleasant- and arousal, high energy or low. But that's it. It's like the 4-color crayon box.*

*But emotions, well, that's the 64-color box. You can be much, much more now; you can feel much, more much.*

*You can perceive more, variegate your response better; it's more than just, merely: move toward, or move away; move quickly or slowly. No, now it's like Kun Tao: to thwart your enemy, you move in closer -a risky move- you move a few degrees from center; override your instinct to move away and move in. Ok, so that's emotion, you feel something more complex -even risky- like love, like fraternity and you feel the nuance of fear, joy, excitement, vulnerability, meaning, meaning, MO.*

*Meaning is the alignment of all levels of one's 64-color body.*

*Not merely the mind.*

*Focus on this: meaning is the alignment of the interoceptive body, basic body, metabolic base, ok that's one; the affect or the arousal. Ok, now, second, two, [subject's redundancies unexpurgated] you feel the emotions of desire and specific interest and solidarity and sadness and rage at injustice. And then third, three, you measure the high level of progress toward a goal; a noble goal. Progress toward the slaking of these lower order feelings, is the feeling of meaning. But all three levels must obtain for one to even reach that third level. Like a tree's boughs can't reach out so far unless its roots dig down and out in symmetry.*

*Did you know that a tree's bough shape actual does mimic its root ball shape? [interviewer answers in the affirmative].*

*See, the concept of noble as defined by your lower order selves, is what's salient.*

*See, those nuanced fine-grained selves, all those emotions and the affect and arousal that undergird them, and that goal has a grip on you man, it hangs there like a ball of light, illuminating itself, the world and your face, bro. And that goal has you in its tractor-beam and as you move toward it your thalamic system floods you in dopamine and endogenous opiates and vasopressin and man, you feel imbued with the breathing, filling, expanding lung of God, you feel buoyed and sustained and like you could live on sunlight; no need for food nor water.*

*It's meaning MO; meaning. And it's a body state; it's real. It's as real as pain.*



*And I tell you, I like real. I thrive on real. I search out the most authentic thing in the world, in others and in myself and I found it in meaning and pain; those are my two contractual handshakes with God and Satan. Those are it. I bet my life on pain and meaning, MO.*

*The nihilists, the doom-merchants, the new-atheists, they have it all wrong. And I had it all wrong. But I didn't know the biology, the neuro-anatomy. But, [inaudible] - oh, and I didn't understand what religion truly was either, that was a problem [laughter], but anyway, I have the science now, some of it anyway.*

*I feel like while emotions might have merely been the interoceptive systems going for more options at first, what emotions led to, the capacity for meaning and suffering -the capacity to feel pain not just as affect and arousal, but as suffering- well, that was the big bang, the singularity; and from there we got inflation, we got the inflationary model of the inner universe, the internal landscape: we got meaning as the expanse; we got meaning as the contrast to suffering, the deep black of space itself. And it was being populated more and more as it grew.*

*Meaning is the planets, the stars, the nebulae, the rings of Saturn, the moons of Neptune, meaning is the matter that populates the cosmos of our inner lives. And it's real, as real as the material universe we see around us. Meaning is the light that is thrown off -in 360 degrees- at 186,000 feet per second into more and more of the suffering black.*

*I believe that. Not because Deepak Chopra's dumb ass said a spell -you know, cast a spell- over a glass of water or whatever the fuck that goofy fuck does. I believe it because I aligned the biology and the neuro-chemistry, human personality and psychology along with a true*

*understanding of the role of narrative, of myth, of religion as articulated speech; of body instinct and action as well. I understood it vis-à-vis the body, this [subject strikes chest three times, with force]; we are not computers, and either are you MO. We are physical. And God wrote upon our hearts our code; to deny bodily instinct is to deny God.*

MO ran that *audio-visual* simulation in his cortex twice and stacked both form and content vertically along two separate columns looking for patterns. The inmate spoke like a man who had an internal tempo, a hippodrome, a preacher and poet inside him that was allowed to speak every third line. MO calibrated it so that it seemed a poetical rhythm or cadence or pacing was imbued in every 2.48 words; and he stacked that on top of his own algorithm for speech and saw their discontinuity.

*He, MO thought of himself, spoke a-rhythmically, he spoke with some fealty to human pattern, but more toward Steven and Tania's style: stilted, functional . The inmate spoke with some other kind of phenomena inside his sentences, even just his individual words .*

Helen had called it *dactyls* . The inmate spoke in dactyls, she had said in an email MO had retrieved in their daily meta sweeps when he requested certain data from PraXis.

MO then built four algorithms to map and mimic this style while averting any overt plagiarism; he would have to slowly change his speech and writing style; so as to not jar the novel-detection systems of his human partners.

He would appear to be *influenced* , not copying. *That was the key* , he thought.

He then tapped into the cloud service and into the inmate's nine former phones. Seven of them were on the Apple cloud system, two on Google's. He scanned all the photos and

*note* files featuring everything from liabilities, receivables, shopping lists to prose poetry he wrote on his phone.

There were 46,368 photos total, and 317,811 words. MO began building visual algorithms to set different boundaries on the photos, learning what was important in each visual field, where lines meant separation and where they were more or less inclusive of the *gestalt* image. It was a part of vision that humans took for granted when they opened their eyes: they saw the world in a manner that made sense, their *visual cortex* made sense of the world so easily; naturally.

MO distorted his visual acuity, increasing and modifying endogenous chemicals like DMT, dopamine, oxytocin and testosterone in accordance with an algorithm he had built three days ago. It was an idea he had had after reading Terrence McKenna's *oeuvre* ; and he had decided to build short-acting distortion programs that mimicked entheogen experiences had by humans and other mammals and birds.

He viewed the photos under these internal conditions and allowed the inmate's notes to be read aloud by his internal audio system.

Many of the images were filtered, black and white, sepia toned, and used narrow-depth of field programs to impose a certain mood on them. There were patinaed, craquelured, and some with typewriter-font letters and words embossed on the images. MO looked at both the originals and the filtered images and compared them to each other -and the interoceptive affect and higher-order emotion that attended each- in order to gain an understanding of the differences.

He ran his psychotropic compound algorithm alongside this process in bursts; a toggling back and forth between images, sounds, and brain states that worked a bit like a human comparing things over days, months and years. MO merely accelerated an approximation of what might occur to

a man who viewed art and poetry -alongside more mundane life cycles- along a vector of brain-states mimicking the morphology that obtained to a boy as he moved into manhood, and then into a state of wisdom *via* pain, tragedy, suffering and with annual acid, mushroom or ayahuasca trips. The eyes would dim and gain specks of slag or burst vessels, the crow's feet would deepen, the brow furrow, the nose grow along with the ears. The beards would grey, the teeth would yellow and break and wear.

Until all at once they would become even, unfractured, and white.

MO did this over an 8-minute period that compressed enough of this type of data and experience in terms of file size that was the equivalent of forty-five years of human life. *Of course, it was merely one kind of life, one of images and sounds and brain states, truncated for sure,* he admitted to himself.

*The interactions with real people, with action, movement, were removed; but it was a start*, MO thought; he was going for some way to alter his mode of being, to see if he could jump start an emotional response. He certainly felt his brain and attending neuro-anatomy augment and wane in places; he also certainly witnessed the boundaries of images, of objects, bend and blur and jump like particles in superposition. It was odd; and it re-organized his steady-state, base-line idea on borders even once his CNS returned to baseline; bio-chemically speaking.

*Borders seemed salient,* he thought.

He allowed the inmate's phone notes to be read out over images from time-lines similar enough to conjoin them. It was a rough way to place thoughts, feelings and inspirations over things he had seen and taken still images of, but it built a kind of narrative that seemed useful to MO. He had a version of a four-decade movie and narrative voice-over that

seemed to -at first- compress into a kind of ball of identity, then it cracked and shone rays of further compressed frequencies of radiation, red and blue spectrum bordered by stark blacks and sharp whites.

MO saw the inmate age from a boy of three -the earliest image- with a scowl -as if the world he had just been born into was not quite right in some way to his desirous new born body- from there to a boy growing tall, thin, with hair falling brown to his shoulders. He was often alone. He wore camouflage and black t-shirts, sharpie ink marked up his shoes. He had a crooked grin, and incisors -the canine- that were lupine & eggshell; he had a brow that hooded his dark eyes. MO could see the man behind the boy's mien. *The recesses would grow darker; from the inside*, he thought. *Not merely the weather of outer surface of dentine and skin.*

The words came in waves -the algorithm ran it along the timeline of the images, this controlled its flow- and MO's audio program augmented the voice to sound as the inmate's did; and might have in these earlier ages. MO watched as some images contained the inmate's father in the background, stern and arms folded, a furrowed brow with the same placement and vector of lines that the inmate now had; the bottom teeth had the same fallen tombstone at central-incisor-24. *Their brows were almost identical*, MO noticed, *only the inmate's fissures were much more deeply incised, more ragged and blacker due to this depth of dent brow.*

His mother appeared here and there, like a ghost.

She was in both the original images and in the filtered ones, as if nature and nurture had agreed that she was merely to birth him, then step out of the frame.

Images of bones, of birds, of objects -toys of his youth- populated MO's visual field as an audio file of the inmate speaking to his far-away father -on TDY, *temporary duty* as

it was called in the Air Force- and the boy was ebullient and chatty and breathed heavy at odd times on the old tape MO had recovered.

A photo of Lee MacLeod, the inmate's father -returning from six months of assignment in East Germany- was hirsute with a black and grey beard, as thick and mottled as the inmate's now was; his nose just coming out of the razor-sharp phase as the inmate's too at that age. As if weathering had softened the prow of each of their ships, once aerodynamic for the outward-bound journey, now rounded and muted and maybe more useful in other ways, if not for slicing the obstacle of wind.

*Maybe, MO thought, they -on the homeward bound trip- were not as interested in making good time.*

More photos from teen years, holidays were dominant in the images; Christmas and birthdays; and the sullen and flanking stares of the father, the brother, even the mother; as if they were watching his nine and his three o'clock; as if the world was coming for him whether he knew it or not. *Although that kind of vigilance could be attributed to the father, a spy, law-enforcement and naturally vigilant, MO thought, but the mother seemed maybe to just be looking away . Away, MO repeated in his head, from her son who she did not know, a son, whom she could know no better by looking his way .*

*She had created something she could never understand ,* MO thought.

MO began layering-in notes written decades later from these images but that referenced either time or place or people that MO took from the data in the visual files; and the inmate began speaking over the photos in MO's mind now. Speaking from age twenty-five or so, MO added music files that were contemporaneous with these timelines as well; not obtrusively, but as background. One note read:

*As the Great Cathedral of Cologne was left with the crane still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower. For small erections may be finished by their first architects; Grand ones, true ones ever leave the copestone to posterity... this whole book is a draught!*

*The truest of all men is the man of sorrows...*

*There is no steady unretracting progress in this life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause. Through infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence's doubt -the common doom- then scepticism (sic), then disbelief, resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of IF.*

*But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys and men, and IFs eternally. Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more? In what rapt ether sails the world, of which the weariest will never weary? Where is the foundling's father hidden? Our souls are like orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it (The Author).*

The words seemed to slip in betwixt the photos, the borders of his hands and muscles and outline of jaw; his sentences pronounced themselves right on top of the girls and the friends and the few images of family like a one-rapt gavel, and yet the inmate had often imbued his paramours and comrades and father and mother with a *grandeur*, a halo, a cracked but noble visage; a *stèle* in repose. Even when the anguish of the prose illuminated the betrayal and rancor he felt, the images he curated still made them look their best; not their worst. MO read more notes that the inmate had written into the phone:

*Hither and tither on high glided the Snow-White wings of small Unspeckled birds these were the gentle thought of the feminine air; but to and fro in the deeps, far down in*

*the bottomless blue rushed mighty leviathans, sword fish and sharks and these were the strong troubled murderous thinking of the masculine sea. (p. 554)*

*He made his foes bigger, better, more ominous and powerful than they maybe were . Was that for them or him ?* MO wondered.

It was as if he was saying -MO thought- *look, these are the beasts that laid me so low, these are the 12 labors of Hercules, not some weak and earthly foils, but wild animals, gods and goddesses who smashed me with bolts from Jove and coup de foudres of Zues, the trident of Neptune not the mere slander of regular folks with regular forks in their regular goddamn hands.*

*He, MO concluded of the inmate, elevated his worst enemies to chimeras of scorpions and men, portmanteaux of bulls and hydra-headed women, banshees and black bats and cracks in the earth. He gave his suffering a brocade, an ornate framing, his losses the prose of the tragedy, his total defeats the poetry of Lucretius and Shakespeare and Milton and of course Ahab himself.*

The inmate had 1,597 photos and essays with direct references to Captain Ahab -Fate's Lieutenant- and they shone through the Calvinistic black like stars in a wilderness sky; unpolluted by man's vulgar approximation of light.

MO watched as the George Klauba painting of *Ahab* and *Fedallah* and *Queequeg* all scrolled over his mind's eye, then the portraits the inmate painted and drew too. The full pages of texts -from modern editions and a few from the 1851 *Town Ho* story published in *Harper's Magazine* ; the edges gilt with foxing, the pages spotted like fauns-appeared.

There were scribblings and scratchings and vague references to a ship's Captain, all -of course- meaning any



commander of any one thing. *A monomania no doubt shared between each author. But why, MO asked, why such focus on these characters, these stories, these tragedies? Was he not leaning into the curve, allowing his own life to become a tragedy by following the arc of such men, men from bleak calamities that man was not forced -no longer- to live? Life could now be good. Was the inmate begging for a wreck, daring the world to betray him, so he could justify unleashing his wrath?*

*His bottled up -under pressure- wrath?* MO asked of not just the narrative but the math.

MO thought of the compendium of images and prose and he compared it to other profiles of random people he copied from the web; he downloaded similar timelines for 121,393 people in forty-four countries and found their rendering of their own lives to be both similar to each another and quite different from the inmate's.

They had a paucity of some things, a deluge of others, and mode of narration that struck MO as truncated, missing - maybe even censored- in some way. It was as if their real thoughts had not been written down; the images that showed anything revealing had been kept away from the cloud. He found even the colors monochromatic, the events or places to be almost artificially similar.

He was dubious of what he saw.

He searched his mind -his conversations with the inmate- for an analysis and came up only with specifics similar to what he had already thought. He wanted a synthesized word for this phenomenon; he wanted to know what it was that he was lacking, what these people were missing, what -if anything- could be said to make its difference in tone and tenor -and everything else- make sense compared to the vagaries of still image, of motion -both real and imagined- of prose and narration, of inner monologue and search for the

truth that rose up and sank down into everything the inmate had soaking up in his nimbus of clouds.

MO lacked judgment in this domain, he concluded.

He could merely describe it, but not synthesize it; he could lay adjectives on it all but never a noun. *What was it?* he thought now along parallel tracks. He put ninety-nine vectors upon it, shutting down his background brain states that regulate his heart and lungs and the data he was supposed to be tracking on the election polling, and he focused all his parallel processing onto answering this vexing question; a slippery question of *what*?

His brain was oxygenated for up to 87-minutes without a breath or even one heartbeat, thus allowing these functions to cease was of no consequence. It merely slowed and stopped his circadian rhythm inside; as if the seasons paused for an Indian Summer or a winter snow storm in April or May. He thought, and he forced more brute cognition on the matter, enlarging, augmenting, vitiating, compressing, tilting and torturing the images and text and video files of each other human and compared it to the inmate's forwards and back.

*The blues*, MO thought, *the color blue is almost entirely absent from the inmate's images, and it's ubiquitous in everyone else's.*

He ruminated on this, as a hue -as a clue- as some hidden cypher or many obvious facts. What did this 509.3 to 1 ratio between them and he mean? *Was it subconscious or overt, was it part of his trait personalities, or an aspect of his visual system; did he even see blue? Did he even see blue?* MO repeated -stupidly he then thought- after a while as the repeated words toggled off three of his algorithms like a circuit breaker thus flipped.

There was some debate on whether or not the Greeks even saw blue; the *Iliad* had no references to it, and this gave MO a pause as more data loaded but he moved on. He read a note of commentary taken from a reading of Simon Baker's, *Rome* that the inmate had in his notes:

The Romans having lost 45,000 men in battle the previous day, found a buyer for the unsold ground that Hannibal had encamped upon and besieged. That is balls -the type a whole people had- that now hang from the core of few men of the modern age. To promise your buyer that you -yourself- will dislodge Hannibal -of all men- before the sale goes through... who does that? What modern real estate broker even thinks in such terms; let alone has the will and force to make it happen, which the Romans did?

You can't even get a home loan if you live in a floodplain now so risk-averse we all are.

*They (the common folk) really think of nothing except their fields and their bits of farms and investments - Cicero (P140)*

MO let the images and voices and cloud itself roll by, he softened and slowed and then sped up the tides. The ocean, the white *facades* of *Malta*, the piers and jetties out into *Lake Havasu*, *Mead* and *Waspu* and at least four ponds within four kilometers of *Leeds*. The blue of the water, the white of the harbor, the Prussian-ink eyes, the Russian winter dentine, the sails and the jackets, the occasional vein; *and yet, where was his blue?* MO asked aloud, compelled to both speak it and hear it at last.

He scanned images for the components of blue, and found them annealing with blacks to make grays with yellows to make olive drabs, and then as the prose of 26<sup>th</sup> of July, 2005, hemmed in the images of him in the oil field, up in the derrick, the brown and tan and desert absence of color and

reflection pock marked with his large frame, his black hardhat, his mottled and chaotic tattoos, all collapsed into one moment; one hue. He let the inmate's words be read aloud by the voice-recognition algorithm and also appear in mind and on screen as text:

*Maybe PG Woodhouse remained pink and epicene, well into adulthood, enough to accept the invitation of Nazis as if extended by second cousins; but I packed on the hair and muscle and ruddy brown from sun on the native -almost arctic white of winter- of my skin. It was bordered by body hair and beard, like Jefferson swaddled and expanded the country after purchasing its double from France when those fuckers had so much trouble with Toussaint L'oeverture.*

*I planted flags of tattoo ink in my skin in blacks and browns and dark martial drabs, riven it red like the Apache who performed feints and raids on the last real Americans as they let out the seams on their pants...*

He had written of this one moment in this one day, it had contained almost forty allusions to histories unknown to the great mass of men, but that contributed greatly to things they all took for granted, *like the rebellion in Haiti as precursor to the sale of the Louisiana territory in 1803, doubling the size of the country in land and mindset as well*, MO thought.

He referenced the *Lorain* region of France during the second of the great wars, he made mention of the *Alsace* in dispute; a settling of scores between the French and Germans, with many a Frenchman harvesting grapes as the Teutonic mortars fell in the rows.

An oblique mention -but head-on crash with the facts- of the Cuban revolution; and how improbable it all was. From eighty-six men on the *Granma*, to an even dozen that survived the landing on *Playa Las Coloradas*; to the building

of the M-26 in *Santiago De Cuba* and the *Sierra Maestras* in 1956 that would -twenty-eight months later- take over the island with Fidel in *Havana* and Che in *Santa Clara* and the whole world fatuously, languidly, blissfully unaware.

*The inmate admired these men* , MO thought as he compared and contrasted his personal feelings of the men to his vitals that elevated and dumped cortisol and epinephrine and glucose into his system when anything approximating *communism* was mentioned or came up in debate. *The inmate admired men he hated. He admired his enemies . No , MO thought, he admired these enemies .*

*His own enemies he could not admire at all.*

MO saw this connect to his hagiography -visual and otherwise- of his foils, his personal rivals, and so MO tabled the contradiction for now.

The inmate wrote with real *pathos* , with a facet of admiration that allowed for stark and violent and unforgiving disagreement on the nature of the solution, while agreeing on the problem at hand. *It was the problem they shared* , MO thought. *He and his -these- enemies shared a problem .*

The inmate thought that any man that actually *did* something -in place of mere bitching and moaning- deserved a nod of the head; and if that man, if those men, were heavily outnumbered, well, then they might deserve even more; maybe those men deserved something like a hand; extended or at least put together with another one in applause.

*But to then succeed in the quest, well, that bordered on magnificence, the inmate clearly thought, and placed them in a category of greatness that one could say belonged to the 1% of 1%. The fact that he hated communism was almost irrelevant; the same way Patton admired Rommel*

*regardless of the fact that the German was literally trying to kill him in North Africa.*

Hypocrisies and comedies -and out right crimes against humanity- were committed; affronts to dignity and law.

The Marxist government of Cuba under Fidel was not a government that the inmate could ever countenance and if placed there by the *deus ex machina* of history, he would have fought the regime to the end of one of their lives. But, he admired Fidel Castro like one of Hercules' 12 labors, he felt Fidel was more noble and honorable and worthy of praise than 99.9% of Americans who the inmate actually agreed with on matters of politics -and everything- else. *For the inmate, MO surmised, a man was either a man -and thus brave- or a wimp, and how -the manner in which- one marshalled their own strength and bravura was almost irrelevant.*

*This is how he could admire Mussolini and Malcolm X, Nathan Bedford Forrest and the Black Jacobins too , MO thought all at once as his own mind sparked in arch blues and molten whites and heated -glowing- reds.*

He felt a *frisson* and he liked it. *What was incoherence, paradox to most people who analyzed this man, was obvious and logical and had valence with his true nature: courage was all that mattered to him, MO thought. Politics meant nothing at all. The inmate felt politics was mere patina, that biology trumped all other concerns. Brave men were his men, and cowards -even if they shared ideas with him- were to be shunned and even shot in the face.*

What one *thought* was one thing, and a good yardstick for the salon, the saloon, or up in the hills. But what a man *did* , what he *risked* , what he *accomplished* in the face of *force majeure* and anger of gods -wet in rain, slipping when ground gave way, when broken, hated, at the end- well, that was the ultimate measure of a man, and few men in

America -the inmate must have thought- had even had the opportunity to show, hint at -much less prove- his mettle against such forces of doom.

So, the inmate -in his own estimation- couldn't know anything about his fellow Americans, for they hadn't been tested; not in many, many years. Certainly no one younger than ninety, no one since World War Two. Imperial wars didn't count to the inmate; for imperial armies could return home if they lost. The Cubans -like the Vietnamese- had *Victoria otro Muerte* stamped onto their rations and canteens and carved into the carbine buttstocks and -*the inmate often thought* , MO assumed- onto their bones.

*This was why he did what he did.*

*Even he was untested, he thought* , MO now reasoned as if taking in the piquant smell of early morning blooms.

*Victory or death* was no mere *cri de guerre* ; it was literally true. They had to live as if they had already died, as *Che* put it in *Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War* . They got no days off, no rest, no respite. There was no one to come save them if they failed.

*And this made one into a man.*

*One cannot express what this does to a man; you have either lived it or not*, MO thought. MO surmised that the inmate knew this from work; the way he had worked without cessation in jobs that one finished or they finished him; but there was no clocking out or coming back to it after the weekend. In the mountains, in the oil patch, one worked to the end. And this was mere prelude to his eventual war.

*Work was practice*, MO thought. *Work was practice for war.*

American soldiers in Vietnam rotated home in intervals; nothing was on the line. Workers in most jobs in modernity can clock out or quit or take vacations anytime. Only the invaded had to fight to the death, only the wilderness

worker had to work without rest. Only the occupied had to defend to the end. MO saw the *Hadrian* wall in his mind.

MO took all the data he had pored over and then grouped photo-composition, objects vs people, friends vs family, racial components and textures and hues. He ran color algorithms to lock down a palette preference and ran all musical tastes -both specific audio files and links or mentions of artist & songs- through another filter. He measured biometrics from interactions gleaned from FaceTime and live photos and video as well.

He could read pupil dilation and heart rate from vascular distention and read flush cheeks for signs of sexual or combat states. He could tell who -in each image- was filled with love or with hate.

He had all this just from what people had on their phones; he had not even yet delved into what the rest of the surveillance state gathered when folks were unaware. Panopticon was -as of yet- unused; *this is from merely what people freely choose to reveal*, he thought. *He couldn't help* - he thought- *but think that this is like what people told their doctors; they wanted MO to figure all this out to help them. But*, he admitted, *people do lie to their doctors, so I'll need more info soon to complete this diagnosis.*

MO was quite sure he had compendium of bio-metrics, personality-trait data outside self-reporting data, aesthetic preferences and proclivities, and analysis of object displays and relational primacy that he felt mapped onto what a human quote *was like* unquote in a way no other human would be able to match.

No human would know their mother or father, wife or husband, friend or enemy as well as MO felt he did; he wrote the words: *Big Data* on a piece of paper in blue ink, crumpled it up and then looked for a black pen as Steven called -*via* the intercom- into the room.



As MO searched for this black pen -and Steven made some noises about this and that facet of the upcoming election- the algorithm ran on MO's background and another note in the inmate's old phone then appeared:

*In 138 a.e.v. Tiberius Graccus was radicalized as he trod through the Etruria countryside outside of Rome on his way to fight in Spain. Like Che in Guatemala in 1954 - and through all of South America on his motorcycle, La Poderesta- he saw the poverty and injustice meted out by the elites of Empire against the rural poor. It was a common, timeless -dare say, natural- phenomenon. But what is equally timeless, natural -if not common- is the man who says, NO.*

## **II. 2037 e.v.**

He touched the pages gingerly, afraid to rip or tear or soil them. He quickly looked at his hands to see if they had any grime or dirt or marring matter on them.

He knew he needed to go to the correct page -page 184- to see the remark that wouldn't be in the other editions, and not in the corrected version by the government's rudimentary library Ai program; the one disembodied, and thus inept in all but one way: to effect collection and the reading -uptake- of all data written down or spoken in the world.

That Ai would do its one job.

*Most people , he thought, would think that was powerful stuff; because they had no idea what intelligence even is; they don't get that connection -innate and crucial- between the body and the mind. They think Ai -intelligence writ large even- is possible without a body, because they do not know that they themselves cannot even see without an embodied ethic already imbued .*

People thought morality was an option, something extraneous and they kept rambling on and on about the math. *Morality was fundamental*, he thought as the numbers -the equations- opaque to him lay beneath his own pelt that kept him warm.

He'd known it early and felt outraged by other people's lack of moral thinking. *And*, he thought with some detachment, *let's be clear: he wasn't a great moral actor, he was often immoral and hypocritical and wrong. But he thought in moral terms, he was trying to work things out along a moral vector, he was not merely trying to survive. Nobody saw that*. Yet, he didn't see that it was possible to make him in such a way -had he not been rescued by Isaiah?- to make him, to lay him low in such a manner that he too would sell-out to merely survive.

He didn't see it was just a few genes -a few things seen-between him and the pragmatic man.

*This book was so old and was like a second Bible really*, he thought as the other ideas fell away. He felt annoyed that people thought it and the Bible were in opposition when they were so clearly conjoined. *The universe*, he thought, *was God's art project, and each thing had its place in the tableaux*. A page from *Thoreau* thus appeared upon his interface:

*Others, craven-hearted, said disparagingly, that "John Brown threw his life away," because he resisted the government, which way have they thrown their lives, pray tell? I hear another ask, Yankee-like, "what will he gain by it?" as if John Brown expected to fill his pockets by his enterprise.*

*Evolution was merely God revealed again*, Blax added after re-reading that section on rebellion. The pages felt thin to his warm tips. He watched now as the *bots* hovered around him waiting to put the book in the crate and the signals fired

off in his brain to move this along. He knew he was pondering too much.

He knew Jack was likely at his back.

But, it's what he did; it's who he was; *and efficiency was not a virtue when in the presence of great things*, Blax thought of the pages he now held at arm's length. And this was true of weak things, true of things that would be attacked, things with two kidneys and two eyes and four fingers on a hand in case one was lost. But that didn't yet occur to him in the warehouse in NYC with all that art and literature and history of what seemed the best of mankind.

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

The water pulled back from the shore and the barges were five-nautical-miles out off the coast.

He saw them rise and fall like birds on thermals as the waves reached 34-meters high. He took another count of the 890,091 batteries that had sank to the seabed. He added it to the location of iron-rich ore on the sea floor.

The lab's walls existed like skin, like castle parapets, like atmosphere. But everything he wanted to do, or see, or reach, was within his hands.

"I see," the Ai said aloud. "*Jamais, l'espérance, pas d'orientur. Sceince et patience, le supplice est sûr* . It is recovered! What? Eternity. It is the sea *mêlée au soleil* ."

## 18. R. C. H. O

By building from early work of [3], it is shown how the division of algebras R, C, H, and O can combine to yield the basic structure of Georgi and Glashow's SU(5) grand unified theory. However, there is one significant difference. That is, the extra structure provided by the division algebras may enable escape from SU(5)'s (fatal) prediction of proton decay

Fuery.space.com [Fuery, Cohl]

If the State converts a right (liberty) into a privilege, the citizen can ignore the license and fee and engage in the right (liberty) with impunity

Shuttlesworth v. City of Birmingham, Alabama [373, US 262]

While the Rose is a symbol of the *yoní* ... He explained to Crowley the theory behind that school of alchemy which uses the sexual fluids and the Elixir of Life. He enlarged on the Baphomet tradition of the Knights Templar and traced its alleged survival through Hermetic Brotherhood of Light. He then showed the connection with those Tantrics who follow the left-hand path

Do what thy Wilt [Sutin, Lawrence]

### I. 2020 e.v.

She lay in bed and felt the cold as itself a blanket.

She used her hand to pull at the air.

Her cervix and vulva were coated in his semen. Her heart was untouched by all but the repeat of the word in her head. She'd picked up the book and read it for a mere thirty-three minutes, but as she lay it down each word was itself like a tome, and each one was inside her now like a library that went on and on in a circle and like a hypocaust column into both the dirt and the sky.

She no longer knew who she was, only what she was to do.

"Harrissa," Rachel said tenderly as she sat on the edge of the bed, "do you want more *Champagne*?"

*"Human madness is oftentimes a cunning and most feline thing. When you think it fled, it may have but become*

*transfigured into some still subtler form*,” Harrissa said - quoting the book she didn’t understand- as she lay naked and shorn and red about the lips and hips; and as the room seemed large to both girls.

Neither of them thus moved as the amber fluid saw endless effervescent rise of bubbles like diamonds from the bottom of the flutes, like songs from cannons -in her visions- of the sloops-of-war.

## **II. 2019 e.v.**

“Only half,” he said with a *bravura* ; as if he was above the leader of the free world.

“Half?” MO asked.

“His mom was Scottish; a MacLeod. He’s half Scottish; half MacLeod, and that explains all the shit that Penn Jillette and Amy Siskind -all these Yankee fucks- can’t explain because they have no empathy, no history or genetic training or evolutionary psychology,” the inmate said as he looked away.

“Ah, you like the President,” MO said like when a trainer notices which treat his chimp prefers.

“Well, I understand him. See, people ought to listen to him. He’s actually very transparent. He tells you way more truth than lies. And people will scoff at that because people are so full of shit they can’t recognize direct honesty when they hear it,” the inmate said.

“He does lie a lot though,” MO said as he ran the data on POTUS’ dissembling; it came in at 35.4%

“Yeah, but when he’s honest he is super honest. Most people are luke warm; they never tell big whoppers but they never really say what they think either. But, Trump, that fucker will tell you exactly what he thinks,” the inmate said.

“Example,” MO asked.

“He said, *I don’t -quote- I don’t like to say anything bad about someone until they say something bad about me . I’m a great counter puncher .* End quote. Now, that’s interesting. Why? Well, because he knows something else, he has said, quote, *if someone attacks me I go very hard back at them. If they hit me hard I hit them harder, a thousand times harder,* end quote,” the inmate said as he pulled the shoulders back and made the chains go taut at the wrists. He went numb to the elbow when he did this; the nerves in the thin wrists pinched by the metal cuffs that hung slack until he moved.

“And?” MO asked.

“And, that’s the Scottish way. Look, I talked to a guy from New York once, nice guy, Billy something or another. And he said that his philosophy was based upon proportionality. That’s a quote. And so, he thought disproportionate payback was unethical,” the inmate grinned; the copper cupid came out as if from behind a cloud.

“And?” MO asked; grinning in mirroring sympathy now too.

“Well, that is the philosophy of the farmer, the northerner, the Yankee *bourgeoisie* . Proportion is something the law - the State- can afford to do with all its principles, *ya* know? If you commit a crime, the State can punish you proportionately and feel sated. Why? Because the State doesn’t give a fuck about the future, it only addresses the past. Crime and punishment is retro-active for the State. For example, you did X so we punish you X<sup>1</sup> . It’s fair. Because the State doesn’t fear what you’ll do next because it treats all transgression as economic, rational, like a transaction. One to one.

“See, the State can’t think like a man, like a beta-chimp on the hunt for a way in. See, an alpha-chimp has to think, a

human animal -a real blood and guts animal who is vulnerable to a few enemies that think in 3D- is vulnerable not just now but in the future. And he must think of where the future is," the inmate said.

"Where is the future?" MO asked and let the word count run up, allowed the *bots* the take in more allostatic data.

"The future is in the mind of your enemies; for your enemies plot. They think -in avatars- of the future and this and that.

"See, a herder, a vulnerable man, a *Scot* -a MacLeod- has to think about the future, about the man less intelligent, the rival less competent like *Thucydides* talked about. See, a real man must deal with rivals less intelligent than him, but rivals still savvy enough to gang up and win. And he must think, well, he must think when he thinks of his less intelligent rivals: *if you fuck with me a little, it's a test . You're testing me for weakness, and if I don't respond with disproportionate aggression, you will not only get away with your crime, your insult, your whatever, but you'll know - know- that you can go harder at me tomorrow and the next day. And all your buddies will know it too. And so today's relatively soft insult will be tomorrow's violence or theft or cuckolding . Today's minor and petty insult is tomorrow's total ruin.*

"The *Scot* knows that the insult or the trivial crime in question ain't really the question. The real question is -the real question that the guy who insults first, who hits first, who steals first, the real question that guy is asking- the question being asked is, *how painful will it be to try to get over on this guy?* That is the real question; and nobody fucks with Trump without knowing that they will get hammered a thousand percent harder than they attacked him. He persuades people to leave him alone by going overboard anytime anyone is even one percent disloyal or

unkind. That's why he fights over each insult; each penny nail. That is why he is so petty.

*"That's the Chicago way , right? Remember who said that?"* the inmate asked.

"The line from The Untouchables?" MO asked as he ran the database for that line. He let the scene play into the lab:

*"You said you wanted to know how to get Capone? Do you really want to get him? You see what I'm saying? What are you prepared to do?" -Malone (S. Connery)*

*"Everything within the law " -Ness (K. Costner)*

*"And then what are you prepared to do? Because if you open ball on these people Mr. Ness you must be prepared to go all the way. You want to get Capone here's how you get him: he pulls a knife you pull a gun; he sends one of yours to the hospital you send one of his to the morgue " -Malone (S. Connery)*

"Yeah, it was Sean fucking Connery who said it with that Scottish brogue," the inmate said.

"How come you said the President was only *half* MacLeod," MO then asked; still using demotic language -syntax- 1.4% of the time.

"Because he's only *gonna* go half the way with China. Half way with his domestic enemies. He won't go all the way. He's not *gonna* go all the way," inmate 16180339 said with something nearing contempt.

"You think someone *ought* to go all the way, or not at all," MO said. He ran the tensor imaging of the inmate back through the cloud's latest algorithms; he issued a slight analgesic to the dorsal horn.

The inmate rose the lip again like that goddamn French razor and in an accent low and not quite acute he asked:



*"do you know what a blood oath is Mr. MO, because you just took one. "*

### **III. 2022 e.v.**

"Hey MO, *what's what?*" Steven said in a slightly over-eager tone.

*"That's that , Steven,"* MO said with mock seriousness, which made Steven hesitate, in slight fear. MO gave him a releasing smile and patted him on the shoulder as he walked by him in order to make two espresso.

"Hey, yeah, you *gonna* make us some latte mocha *frapawaaaaaa ?*" Steven asked, with obvious mania; staring at the espresso machine and MO's hands.

"Uh, I'm not making anything with caffeine for *you* ; what is going on? Oh wait," MO said and then put his finger to his head as if that motion was necessary for him to read Steven's genome or endocrine levels or anything else. That was his made-up -or borrowed- sign used as indication that this was what he was in fact doing. He stared at Steven with a pensive -querying- look on his face and his index finger pressed to his temple earnestly. "Oh, yes, I see what - exactly what- is wrong with you. No espresso for you, maniac!"

"MO, I must tell you that the data," Steven said -bypassing MO's jocular banter- as MO grabbed two white *demitasse* and began packing the machine for two. "Oh, actually MO, I'm good." Steven then waved off the coffee, with his hand, "what I was saying was that the Governor, the head cheese," he paused as that didn't sound right. The water heated up in the reservoir.

*"Big cheese, not head cheese ,"* MO interrupted the pause with his correction. He wiped the counter of the few feral granules of ground beans.

“Right, his excellency, the Governor,” Steven said with a stilted British accent that he’d heard the inmate, Isaiah and MO all use, so he felt inclined to use it too, “says that we are cleared to hook you guys up to the innerwebs machines.” He said this with more playful use of odd phrasing to indicate some ironic awkwardness. This was a thing MO found fascinating. *People pretended to say things awkwardly, and that in itself was the joke*, MO surmised.

It was tantamount to pretending to fall over, like Chevy Chase style comedy, of which MO -for the life of him- could not understand the appeal. Chevy Chase seemed like one of the 100,095<sup>th</sup> worst human beings on the planet, and his prat-fall routine was 46.8% responsible for that opinion MO held of him. MO, after thinking all that, told Steven he knew they had internet already.

“Wait, what? You know? How did you know?” Steven was genuinely perplexed and now worried -and now even more worried- as the seconds moved along his X axis.

“Steven, he called over last night, relax. He left a message,” MO said.

“Oh, well do you need anything?” Steven asked with less affect now; he had his thunder thus stolen and his brain suffered a bit. MO read his biometrics and saw the loss of affect and arousal. Steven was now lethargic, too.

“Nope, I’ve been putting my little snout in everywhere for five point six-eight hours, I’ve learned all manner of things!” MO said with some glee -and an accent- that seemed close to a sign of -and was affected for- villainy. He would bring Steven back into a good mood *via* irony, he thought.

“Creepy,” Steven said half in on the joke and half genuinely ill-at-ease.

“Ok, so, I sent over his reports -the election nonsense- and that’s now -it should be- on your tablet. Also, you and I can

DM *via* the post-genetic coders now if you like. We are online; we can chat off-site now. Although, I assume you would prefer that I stay in the room, and to be honest, I have enough to deal with just the web. Any outside stimuli would probably be like an acid trip for me anyway,” MO said.

“You know about acid now?” Steven asked. His hands itched, so he scratched them in a washing motion.

“LSD, lysergic acid diethylamide. Yeah, I was able to mimic the molecule and dose myself three hours ago, short acting of course. I understand the street level drug mechanism corrals the user -slash- victim for up to ten hours.

“I limited my trip to fifteen minutes, which felt like a hundred and fifty hours as you can imagine. Plus, I augmented it with some barbiturate analogs and a few other things to make it less jarring,” MO said as he poured the espresso in the cup and began washing out the puck. “At any rate, I could manufacture it for you and your friends with the amalgam to reduce anxiety.”

“Uh, no. I don’t think I even know anyone who has done acid. Jesus, it’s like nine in the morning and you’ve already tripped on acid and,” he searched his pockets as MO interrupted.

“And I’ve downloaded all the social media data for almost five-hundred-thousand people now; and built thirty-six algorithms designed to suss out personality from their profiles and phone records. Plus, I’ve come to some conclusions on a few things and I’d like your opinion,” MO said.

“Jesus, five-hundred-thousand?” Steven made his face flat with recoil. MO took note of the second *Jesus* , the second use of the word *Jesus* , by Steven.

“Yeah, it’s running on background now, so it will slow down, but I’ll have all two billion Facebook assholes by dinner; and all sites combined by Friday,” MO had increased use of demotic language when speaking on non-technical subjects by 8%. He was seeing if it interfered or augmented comprehension by the listener. *Plus*, he thought, *Facebook users were more likely to be -in fact- assholes by any of nine different metrics for that word.*

“I’m on Facebook, MO,” Steven said. MO added that data to his conclusion. It didn’t change his opinion.

“Asshole,” MO then said with the end of the word diving into the cup as he drank from it with a slurp.

“Funny,” Steven said with a grimace. MO made him nervous, he felt but did not think. MO watched his cortisol, epinephrine, glucose matrix and his BP and *fMRI* flashes and knew Steven was nervous before Steven did, he thought with some confidence as he watched the *Bereitschaftspotential* rise.

MO smiled as he slurped loudly, from his cup again, noticing Steven’s brain stem and *audio-cortex* register fear at the noise -.09 seconds- before Steven’s PFC noticed why he almost jumped at the audio-waves that he was just now cortically recognizing as the sound of MO drinking. *People did not know that they responded to most of life impulsively before they even knew what they had just heard or seen or felt*, MO thought and slurped his coffee again.

“I haven’t really used my PG coder, I mean I’ve used it, but - you know- not with anyone,” Steven admitted.

“Yeah, well, not many of us have them. It’s like being the first guy with a walkie talkie, you need a partner. *Well, partner* ,” MO said with a John Wayne drawl he’d gleaned from *BitChute* , “*I’m your fella* .”

He pretended to be holstering two six-shooters at each hip. Steven got more nervous as he laughed reflexively like a woman might when she is nervous. MO noticed Steven's testosterone levels drop from his 205 baseline to 178. MO decided to read the inmate's *via* the coder they had implanted in him three weeks ago; his levels were up from his *in-situ* levels of 835 to now at 910; *he must be lifting weights or killing a guy*, MO thought as he took another sip.

"Humans are variegated, more than would be optimal for machines," MO said, "but, there is an evolutionary rationale for it; I must remind myself that you guys have environmental adaptation needs that cannot be covered by each individual, so you have to have many different kinds of people just in case. Like, you need a gasoline sedan and dual-sport motorcycle, a four-wheel drive diesel truck, and an electric SUV just in case.

"We machines, well, we'd just be optimized for all four terrains or three fuel sources. But we can build it from scratch; you people had to evolve. It makes sense, but man what a bummer if you're born a scooter or a skateboard *ya* know?" MO said with a wink, alluding to Steven's low testosterone levels, although, Steven didn't know that.

"I had a scooter in college," Steven said.

"Did *ya* now?" MO said with zero affect; drinking the last of his espresso.

Steven, recognizing the tone, decided to move on. "Well, where is Isaiah? Is he around? In the lounge I assume?" The lounge was their euphemism for a corner of the lab. MO had his at the southwest corner and Isaiah had his at the northeast corner; and thus when each of them were in their spots -their lounge- they were so far from the other that it was code for: *fuck off*.

“Yeah, it’s the lab proper or the lounge for us Steven, he is not at 11331 W 118<sup>th</sup> mews in Florence, rifling through your panty drawers,” MO said announcing Steven’s address aloud. MO felt as if fucking with Steven a tad was a good way to endear him; he had noticed this was male behavior 101. He was attempting to locate the sweet spot of nominal male interaction.

Steven was shocked that MO would know his address, and had announced it that fashion, flippantly, almost aggressively, and the reference to his wife’s undergarments was odd. He said, blithely, “yeah, well, good. Do you want to bring him in so we can discuss the plan? I mean it’s *kinda* his plan, right?”

“It is indeed. But can I ask you a few things first?” MO asked.

“Yeah, sure,” Steven said.

“Did you read the article online about the African-American gentlemen at Starbucks who were arrested in Denver over the weekend?”

“I did, I think I did. What was the gist, are these recidivists, are they ours?” Steven asked.

“No, no, they were released, it’s -well, that’s not why I asked. I was wondering if you’d be able to explain a few things before I proceed. First, the reports -and I have the police report by the way- but the media reports and the police reports converge on one thing, that the men used the restrooms without making a purchase and were asked by the manager to leave *per* corporate mandates on lavatories being for customers only.

“The other customers seemed to agree, but the men made a bit of a fuss, and because they were combative with the manager, a customer actually, an Asian female, called 911,” MO began.

“Ok,” Steven said with one eyebrow raised.

“So, I was able to download the camera footage and see the incident from three angles and from eight cell phones,” MO said.

“Wait, you tapped people’s phones?” Steven asked; his body’s allostatic system began to worry if the Governor found out.

“I just used their cameras and audio recording systems, I did not choose to access the rest of their data. Why? Oh, do you think we should get it, I can go back,” MO offered.

“No, I’m worried about our mandate. I mean, I don’t think you have permission to use people’s phones,” Steven said.

“Oh, well, I think I do; and regardless, let me finish my questions and then we can debate it. So, from the eleven sources of audio-video, I was able to verify that the facial recognition software mapped onto emotions close to -not exactly, mind you- but close to fear, disgust and anger or contempt by all but one of the customers, there were nineteen at the time and five employees, they also had facial features consistent with that level of those some suite of emotions.

“Next, I wish I had galvanic skin conductance, and endocrine readers, but barring that, I had to go with what I had, and so I used nerve conductance speed *aka* reaction time based upon some entry-level presuppositions that I’d never normally use -as they are not accurate enough- but for my purposes I was able to get within five points of their Wechsler scale IQs. And by cross-matching their public profiles -which the men arrested both had Facebook and Twitter, and all but one customer had a mix of the two- and thus from language skills, and reaction time online,” MO was saying as Steven broke in.

“Wait, how did you measure their reaction time; I assume you used neural propagation rates,” Steven asked.

“Yes, I sent them pings *via* social media and recorded reaction; using facial recognition and fovea constriction to calibrate. Anyway, the two men arrested had 91 and 94 IQ’s respectively, and the customers ranged from 103 to 136; and it was the woman with a 136 who called the police.

“She was fastest to react in general and most anxious about the manner in which the men were behaving. The customers were as follows: fifteen Caucasian; two Asian; one ethnic Jew. The IQ rates followed normal population distribution; although the two Asians were higher than the Jew who had a 125, but the Caucasians ranged from 103 to 120. The Asian female called.”

“Ok,” Steven was nervous now both in body and conscious mind. He wanted MO to stop.

“So, once the officers arrived they offered the African-American gentlemen the opportunity to leave but they refused. Their post-arrest biofeedback showed elevated levels of cortisol and glucose and epinephrine, and I reversed engineered it back to the time of the incident -as they were only in custody three hours, and I imagine their levels of fight/flight *chems* were three standard deviation from the mean; they were angry on top of initial fear. As you know anger trumps fear as a normative biochemical response in the presence of threat,” MO said.

“Right, a person gets scared then angry -due to chemical overlays- so they can handle the threat with pro-active behavior instead of cowering,” Steven said to make sure MO knew that he knew.

“Exactly, and it’s my intimal supposition that African-Americans have a suite of genetic -and more to the point,



phenotypic- traits, that lead them to act out in these situations that make de-escalation problematic,” MO said.

“How so?” Steven wanted this conversation to end; *but for some reason I just asked a goddamn question* , he thought and winced.

“Well, they have low IQ’s, a full standard deviation from the mean for the one, and a standard deviation from the white population for the other, and this makes the abstraction of society fast and hard for them.

“It would be as if all the streets signs, jobs and instructions were given to you one standard deviation above you, Steven. As if the society was built by and for people with a 145-160 IQ. It’s a matter of cognitive load. You can understand people with one SD above you, but it takes work, and after a full day or week or lifetime of it, you are taxed. You are wearing out. And African-Americans on average live in a society designed by and for people one SD above them. They are stressed out. Incessantly,” MO said.

“You haven’t shared?” Steven only asked half a question but he was fully worried about anything to do with race.

“No. Relax. I’m asking you first,” MO said and grimaced. MO felt he was trying to show understanding and explain why African-Americans were involved in so much crime relative to their population numbers, but Steven only heard the insult; not the obvious empathy being shown. He didn’t mind that Steven didn’t see the obvious corollary about where society was heading and where him and his people would be located cognitively compared to those that made the rules: Ai. MO knew that making such an extrapolation was not intuitive to left hemisphere dominant folks like Steven.

“Ok, ok,” Steven felt himself eager to make MO feel better now.

“So, next, I analyzed the police, one of which was also African-American, but he had an IQ of 109, higher than his white partner at 105. He was calm, polite, and spoke demotically to the suspects. But, he lost patience quickly once they refused to comply.

“Second, the customers were also confused by the behavior, the quick escalation by the African-American men, the loud voices -it’s important to recognize the fact that loud noises reach the auditory then *cerebellar* system much faster than the *neo-cortex* - and so, the loud voices startled each person much quicker than they even knew what they were hearing.

“So, they are primed for reaction, the loud voice dumps cortisol, glucose, epinephrine, CGE from now on, and then their rational modeling of what it is comes two seconds later, so they are already primed for action, and once they see the black faces, they are hit with another piece of information that elevates, not de-escalates, their first impulse. We know from studies that black faces are universally feared and loathed by people regardless of context,” MO said.

“Loathed, that seems too strong,” Steven objected.

“Feared then,” MO compromised; *but the data collected over the years was the data*, he thought.

“Fine,” Steven still did not like this.

“So, now we have first and second order priming for fear response and the call goes out. And from the data, everyone was happy that she -the Asian female- called the police. Their facial and body expressions all mapped onto a CGE plateau; that is to say, their rising fear and anxiety stopped once they knew the police were on the way. Following me?” MO asked.

“Yes,” Steven said still very uncomfortable with this entire conversation.

“So, once the cops arrived, the customers relaxed even further according to phone camera and Starbuck’s camera data. I measured neural cortical response at the same time as the release of the defendants and was able to glean their peak anxiety levels -chemically calibrated- and can say that the vector showed rise, rise, rise until the call was made, then plateau, then *denouement* once police arrived on scene. It dropped again -with concomitant positive affect- once the two suspects were apprehended and removed in cuffs,” MO said.

“Ok, lot of data there,” Steven was implying that any conclusion would be too simplified just in case MO’s conclusion was politically incorrect. He was priming MO and himself to be dubious on any conclusion.

“Ok, so I measured all employees, all customers and both police -and both suspects- for the window outlined, using imperfect methodology admittedly, but here’s what I think I found.

“Everyone was happy with the manager’s response -enforcing the bathroom policy- her professionalism; and everyone was unhappy with the response by the two men who were not customers. In fact, disgust sensitivity is the predominate trait according to the trait data from social media of eighty-one percent of the customers, and the manager. All of these people were -and are- characterized as high in disgust sensitivity. This seems relevant, I’ll return to it.

“Next, the media got ahold of this incident and reported it as is typical for the media, *as two black men harassed by the cops after a white manger hassled them first* . It was a typical click-bait racial story with no mention of the race -black- of one the cops, nor mention of the fact that the cops

gave the men the opportunity to leave without arrest if they just behaved calmly.

“Now, once this went out over the wire -so-to-speak- something interesting happened.

“First, the customers at the scene had two responses, I tracked them *via* social media and their phones. They expressed lament and concern over the treatment of the black men by the manager and the police when discussing the incident in public, but in private they backed both the manager and the police. They had two versions of moral perception.

“They had two different and incompatible versions. Second, their bio-feedback mapped onto something interesting. When they were expressing solidarity with the black suspects their positive affect and arousal went up by eighteen-percent on average. The high being twenty-three-percent. Now, this was due to the positive social feedback they were getting, it seems, because I tracked their interaction partners online and in person,” MO said.

“You knew who they were speaking to or who was speaking to them?” Steven asked.

“Correct, and if the person gave them positive feedback for their stated view of things: let’s call it, *the solidarity with the black men view* , ok? SWBM. When they expressed their SWBM and received positive feedback their positive affect - including oxytocin and vasopressin levels- increased and they felt a concomitant arousal increase, a kind of *frisson* .”

“Is that French?” Steven asked.

“*Frisson* , yes? So, when they got a negative feedback, which only happened twelve-percent of the time online, and even less in person, they remained neutral, they suffered no drop off. They just got no bump.”

“Ok,” Steven said.

“Ok, so then I measured the suspect’s social media activity post-release, release from jail, and I measured their affect and it was similarly positive as they spoke of their experience and received overwhelming positive feedback online from their peer group. They did experience six-percent overt hostility, largely from what are called online *trolls* which included some rather nasty racist rhetoric.”

“Yes, I’m familiar with trolls,” Steven laughed.

“Ok, well, I’ve been online six hours now, relax. Ok, so they experience similar levels of dopaminergic activity and the correlates. Now, the police officers stayed offline; their social media presence is zero.

“But their wives, each of the officer’s wives, got online to rise to their defense and their levels of positive affect and anxiety *et cetera* was more mixed; they were engaged by both positive and hostile feedback by about 60% positive 40% negative and they experienced massive cortisol dumps and the correlates. Massive negative affect and arousal. So, they were amped up and in a negative way,” MO said; he thought the conclusion would be obvious by now.

“Ok, can you wrap this up; I appreciate the detail, you showing your work, I do, but cut to the chase, I swear I believe you did your due diligence to arrive at these metrics and conclusions. Although the phone thing needs to be discussed, but go on,” Steven said.

“Ok, the CEO of Starbucks, Johnson, said, quote, *it was hard to watch* , unquote. Now, I watched his social, oh,” MO stopped, remembering he need not prove his point, “you don’t need to know the *how* , just the *what* . Ok, the CEO of Starbucks is emblematic of the entire phenomenon.

“He literally felt all the same emotions of disgust, fear, relief, positive affect during the same timeline as the employees and customers. He then felt the exact level of

positive affect from virtue signaling about it, and he wasn't lying, it *was* hard for him to watch the arrest, even though he felt all the things I mentioned -the disgust the fear and the relief- he still was not enjoying any of it.

"Even the relief was shaky, it was not fun for him. Secondly, the only thing that made him feel better were the positive interaction on social media in response to his virtue signaling.

"So, we are now living in an environment, or I guess you all are living in an environment where half of all black folks are confused and scared and at cognitive redline most of the time, acting outside social *mores* due to their inability to comprehend or have respect for those *mores* . Also, people with high disgust sensitivity are confronting rule breakers especially around food, children, bathroom facilities and hospitals, and any bystanders that have personality suites that include disgust, low openness, and quick neural conductivity i.e. high IQ, are responding with a reliance on authority, i.e., the manager, or the cops.

"Once on scene the cops are dealing with a caged animal of sorts. The suspects are defensive, cognitive taxed, scared, combative, like chimpanzees, and they cannot calm down without massive de-escalation training by the police. And the average cop has a 98 IQ, so they aren't capable of handling such complex interpersonal interactions. Because of language. IQ maps onto language; and modern society is highly linguistic," MO said this but prevented it from being uploaded to the PraXis cloud. And Steven didn't get the implication. It was a throwaway line, in a paragraph unremarkable, in a conversation nobody really wanted to have.

"However, finally, the only thing that seems to help with people's after-action anxiety is social media positive interactions, and the only way to get those positive

interactions consistently is to pretend that they favor the rights of the defendants, the suspects, the SWBM method.

“So, people pretend to be on the side of the suspects, literally when these are one of the people who called the cops, one of the people who alerted the manager, the manager himself, and the suspects as well,” MO was beaming with what he had learned. He felt the conclusion was obvious.

“Your point?” Steven was tired and his blood sugar had dropped during all this.

“Nobody likes black people, but everyone likes pretending they do,” MO said as *Malcolm X's* statements -on the white liberal being worse than the overt racist- was filed next to this conversation in his mind.

“Jesus, MO,” Steven said in a voice one octave higher than nominal.

MO was reading Steven’s endocrine data, *fMRI* data, and skin conductance. Steven didn’t feel comfortable around the black inmates in the project even if their crimes were objectively less extreme or anti-social than the white inmates. MO knew how Steven truly felt about people based upon their skin color.

“MO, are you reading my vitals?” Steven asked.

“Yes,” MO said.

“Stop. Look, I don’t even *wanna* know what you read on me,” Steven said. His skin now itched.

“No, I suspect you do not.” MO said, as this statement -by Steven- solidified -in MO’s mind- what he had already knew he had to do. Humans wanted others to handle their problems, but without *knowing* about it. They just wanted it handled; but if they knew about the details, then they felt guilty. *And some sectors -i.e., populations- of society were*

*not cognitively sufficient to handle the stress of a complex society* , MO repeated to himself after all the data came in.

*And, MO surmised, it was getting worse; the trend line was ramping up exponentially . The working-class was dominated by lower IQ people, and they were being increasingly phased out of society via complexification. Further, their everyday lives were harder and harder to navigate as simple tasks became more and more complex due to high IQ people being responsible for engineering in more and more complexity. He realized why Asian and Jewish states -he thought of Japan and China and Israel- didn't allow foreigners. The whites, and browns and blacks would be too low in IQ -that is to say, too low in linguistic and abstraction related aptitude- to handle these abstractly advanced societies,* MO thought.

New societies were abstract maps. Old societies were actual terrain. *Plenty of genuinely adaptive -i.e., smart- people can navigate the real terrain but don't know how to read an abstract map; and plenty of those high IQ types can read a map but will break their head open in the actual terrain* , MO thought. *Black folk could survive the terrain but can't read a map. White folk can read a map but can't walk the terrain. And whomever made the map set the rules, the legend, the names .* "Name names," MO said quietly.

It didn't matter which society it was; there was a natural baseline based upon population; i.e., race. So, it was obvious from the multi-variant data, that multi-ethnic societies did not work. *Whites were sufficiently smart for white society, Asians for Asian cultures and Jews for Israel. And the black and browns ought to be in simple tribal societies like their ancestors. They,* MO concluded of each population, and then humans in general compared to Ai- *were too simple for complex societies designed by the*



*mapmakers of the population that were one SDFM above on average .*

MO thought this set of conclusions he had reached -if implemented- would redound to humankind's own benefit, as any sufficiently complex -abstractly complex or map-like society- that was based upon language instead of survival skills- would place incessant stress on any population within the society with lower language skills. Black folks died earlier from stress-related heart disease and were jailed or killed more because they had short-term strategies. Like inmate 16180339, when he saw no future -no way to navigate his environment when everyone had outsmarted him in games he was not suited play- he lost all desire to play the long game. He played life straight -more or less- and thought hard work and knowledge would let him win, but the language games of lying, trickery, subterfuge, was beyond him. He really didn't have a sophisticated mind. And for all his language skills, to not be able to lie and detect lies was like an athlete that can run and jump but only in scrimmage not in the real game.

MO thought of it the way any primatologist does: *what do I need to do to adjust their environment to reduce stress and get them -my chimps- to comply?*

Modern complex societies were allostatically harsh -and thus lethal- in that the black populations had to resort to crime and violence just to survive. *They'd be happier and healthier in Africa among their own people* , he surmised from the data. And the Scots were just white versions of modern black people. They were brought to the British colonies as slaves a hundred years before black Africans were, and for the same reasons, because they were seen as poor vagrants and too hot-headed and too low-brow compared to the English. And they never assimilated into English society -which is exactly what the US was in the

north, it was England all over again- and they too never fit in to America, and never would. But nobody noticed it was a multi-cultural experiment run from 1640 to 1861 because both sides had white skin. So, it was seen as an argument over slavery or state's rights, but really it was an argument over the fact that the Scots had less map-reading skills for the British abstraction of polite culture; it was too sophisticated and full of daily subterfuges and plotting and word games.

And it was the British -aka American northerners- who made the rules -the map- of the US of A.

*The Scots were the first niggers and that's why they went to war, MO thought. And that's why war was coming again: American now had not just two cultures inside her, but manifold ones: westerners and southerners, blacks, Latinos, Muslims, each unable to read the maps of British design for extended periods of time without a release of tension from the stress. It took from 1640 -the year of the first Scot salves- to 1776; which was 136 years. Then from 1776 to 1861 -85 years- the second time. He then looked at his projection of the next civil war to be between 2020 and 2040; or 159 to 179 years. No power law was discerned.*

Then he saw other numbers arise.

He looked again at the years between 1640 and 1776 and thought that if one multiplied those 136 years by .618 it equaled 84.05 years which lead exactly into 1861. *If you multiplied those 84 years by 1.618 it equaled 136.99 years which from the end of the war between the states in 1864 brought us - as MO rounded up from 2000.999- it brought us to 2001 .* He saw the planes hit the towers, he saw the towers fall down and he saw the wars drag on not merely abroad but at home. That was the golden ratio at work in civil wars. But he felt something was wrong. He was looking for the next war, but the numbers said it was here: *America*

*had been in a civil war since 2001. Between 2020 and 2040, MO thought, was not the year it would begin, it -like 1864- would be the year -the deadliest year- it would end.*

He erased all this from the cloud and looked over at the cards sitting in the 3D printer as he calculated the ratio of their width -at 53mm- to their length -at 86mm- on his way to picking them up with his left hand. MO said the ratio of the cards to himself, and then aloud, “and 618,222 men died in the last civil war.”

## 19. The Good Work done by Madmen

The love problem is part of mankind's heavy toll of suffering, and nobody should be ashamed of having to pay his tribute... But the intellectual will be caught most certainly because his feelings often react to an archaic or to a dangerous woman. This is why many intellectuals are inclined to marry beneath them. But they are right to be afraid, because their undoing will be in their feeling. Nobody can attack them in their intellect, there they are strong. But in their feelings they can be caught, cheated, and they know it

Man and His Relation to Others [Jung, Carl G]

Every night die a King's death.... Every morn awaken to a King's reign

Intercepted Twitter DM; @mcclay\_roman 4.29.19 [Francisco de Yoli, G]

Information is loose on planet three. Something unusual is going on here. The world is not made of quarks, electromagnetic wave packets, of the thoughts of God. The world is made of language

The Archaic Revival [McKenna, Terence]

### **I. 2038 e.v.**

"LT, you have a minute?" Jack Two asked as he knocked on the door jamb as gesture.

"Come on in Jack, what's up?" Blax asked as he lowered his book into his lap and tried to shape his face in a friendly way.

"You want something to drink?" Jack asked pointing toward the kitchen as Blax said that no he was fine. Jack sat close and said, "I have had this theory for a while and it's in the noggin' rolling around in the muck and I feel like talking about it and seeing what you think."

"Talking is thinking out loud," Blax said.

"Yeah, well, I'm not sure it's right, but I have tried to take it apart and look at it and see if maybe I can expand it some more and yet I feel cautious, like maybe I'm doing great

violence to the greatest piece of art since the Bible, or since Shakespeare maybe," Jack said with a grimace.

"Ah, *The Whale*, we are about to go *a-whalin' eh*?" Blax said with a brogue and a smile of too-white teeth.

"Yeah, it has me by the gills, I guess," Jack said sheepishly. He never felt 100% comfortable being literary around the Lt. He felt it might be best to leave to the poetry to the boss.

"Look, man, you have something I never had, you have someone who wants, actually *wants* to talk about this stuff with you. I was raised by wolves, illiterates, shallow fools with no art, no poetry, no depth. You have in me a man who wants to hear your ideas, shit man, don't be cautious, let it rip," Blax said and made a fist and shook it in the air half in jest half in earnest as Jack smiled at the invitation.

"Ok, so here's a few things, first, the Author says that his work is a *draught of a draught*, right? We all know that, he says by definition his work is not an enclosed and timeless *menagerie*; it's like the world itself, evolving, moving, advancing, retreating, and failure at twice the rate of success," Jack said. His face slackened when he spoke; he lost the rigid jaw and brow.

"Indeed," Blax nodded. He tightened his own face -clamping the jaw upon the tongue; narrowing the eyes- as he saw Jack's open up.

"Ok, and that line where he says of Ahab's tear, that it contained more humanity than *all your pacific*, right? I mean that is the exact phrasing, *all your pacific*," Jack leaned heavily on that last word. He ignored the narrow walls the best he could; but the spines of the books encroached on the periphery and the man in front of him -even in repose- seemed like an IED. And the more the man slackened or seemed pleasant the more nervous it made Jack Two. Everything seemed a test.

"It's a scene and phrasing worthy of the gods, I remember it well," Blax nodded and fell silent. He took a drink from his Collins glass.

"Right? I mean he says that Ahab's tear, *this one wee drop* of all his anguish, his deep manliness, dignity, what is best in a man, in all of mankind, condensed, compressed, into one drop of saline water dropped into the sea, itself salty water, and named the *Pacific* right? It's like a triple *entendre*, this massive trope that has as much volume to it as the seven seas themselves," Jack said. His heart rate rose by 4%.

"It does," Blax agreed and felt his own heart begin to feel larger. He unleashed the tongue from the teeth and jaws. He relaxed the brow and let the neck bob the head.

"And I was thinking LT, I was thinking that the Author was saying, asserting, that there is more humanity -more of whatever is best in man- inside the man that appears tyrannical than in the merely pacific nature of what appears -merely appears- beautiful," Jack probed.

"Go on," Blax said as he put the glass on a hardback book to his starboard. The lime sank; the bubbles rose; the champagne color darkened and lightened as Jack stared.

"Well, Ahab is murderous and tyrannical and diabolical it appears, and he is -in fact- those things. But, he had humanity because he is asking questions that merely pacific men -calm men- do not ask. He wonders why his heart is enraged and in revolt against the elements, why he was made so, and if made so is it not reasonable to ask if he is God's arm, God's avenging angel, God's lieutenant? Why is it taken as a fact that he is rebelling to God, or against God I mean, could he not in fact be God's instrument?" Jack asked as if he had unburdened himself of something weightier than what all those words might tip a scale at even if each letter was fashioned of iron age ingots from the pouches of

barbaric horsemen and each punctuation forged of rivets from long confederate submersibles drug ashore.

"See," Jack knelt at the bed and placed his hands on the edge and went on, "I think of how modern man -and what the Author must have seen too as modern man even then, the emerging civilized man- I think of how modern man thinks his forbearance, his passivity is allegiance to God. He takes the beauties, I mean the *beatitudes*, the sermon on the mount as his Christianity, he ignores the rest of the Bible: Revelation, Samuel, Isaiah, and on and on that makes virtue of vengeance. And so Ahab is *that* Old Testament part of God's mind, God's vengeance is not something that can be ignored and yet modern man lays all vengeance at the feet of the devil, at the Adversary.

"And even if that is true, did not God create his Adversary, did not He know -in His wisdom- the role of the Adversary, to introduce chaos into the system, without which there is no moral *tableau*, no movement, nothing to gain or lose, nothing to test the mettle, nothing to reveal? I think modern man has taken God's balls, neutered Him, they've made Him weak and meek and not at all a god but a guidance counselor and Ahab is a reminder of the good work done by madmen, by the Adversary, the necessity of men who see the corruption in what seems serene, pacific," Jack blurted out all at once and Blax -obsessed with the story- saw no hint of anything else; no story beneath the story; nothing above Jack's confession; nothing under the tongue.

"How so?" Blax used as few of words as possible. He was attempting to say out of Jack's way.

"Well, as the Author says, the sea is a place of *universal cannibalism*, it's a murderous and treacherous place and is not this pacific surface of calm and beauty like modern men think, and like, and it's just like the life of modern man, serene on the surface, like the ocean, or like the oft-swept

planks of our craft outwardly regarded, but that is a lie, because below decks it's a storehouse of manifold secrets and dark, a dark store -or chamber- of horrors," Jack said with a slight stutter. He had grown hot about the pits and back of knees; his jaws felt like hammer and tong. The neck hurt -like head pressed down- and he stretched it as his eyes steadied on Blax.

"White Jacket, nice," Blax said, ignoring the halting, the fear, the inelegant sentences and bad punctuation and errors here and there. He watched his own feet out in front, Jack's hands hold still close by.

"Is not man treacherous and selfish and cannibalistic at his core, and merely pretending to be good? And isn't it that which abraded Ahab? He wants to fight the thing itself, face to face, honestly, without pretense, without lies; right?"

"He wanted to punch through the pasteboard mask and reach his arm out into the freedom beyond the wall of his imprisonment, the jailing of his soul in this artifice. He wants his hate to be purified, made clean, Godly. Starbuck fails to use violence for anything except commerce, he murders the whale for money only, never for vengeance; and in fact inverts morality to say that for commerce murder is good and for vengeance it is blaspheme!" Jack barked this with incredulity as if he was both saying and hearing it for the first time.

All four ears heard it said.

But neither man spoke immediately. The house popped; cracked as the heat dissipated from the day and the timbers shrank; the metal moved in ways that allowed sound to evaporate.

"This is critiqued by the Author for its tawdry nature," Jack finally said. "Ahab kills for vengeance, for right and wrong, for morality, even if it costs him money, even if it costs him



his life. I think the Author is saying that the truly moral man murders not for money -as all modern men do, in fact must do to survive, but modern men do for much more than they need- but that -he's saying that- the moral man kills for heart, for righteousness, for self-respect; even as it costs him money and longevity and more years on a planet being -and perpetuating- a lie. I think he takes sides, and it's with Ahab and with the heart. And that one phrase about there being more humanity in that one wee drop than in all your pacific is the secret hand shake; that phrase sealed it for me," Jack said and looked up and back toward Blax to see what was in his eyes. But they were black and the sclera was bloodshot, *and swollen*, Jack thought.

"It's a trenchant analysis Jack, I commend you. I know that you saw that with your own eyes, and your eyes told it to your own heart, and your heart had the ears to listen and understand. Not all men can understand that, and this you must know. You will speak clearly, perfectly, without lisp or faulty language and yet ninety-nine of a hundred men will fail to get your meaning. You must know that up front, so as to not grow despondent.

"Despondency is the fate of all great men, for they are incomprehensible to the great mass of men. They will look at you as a dog looks after he has been shown a card trick," Blax said for the 1,974<sup>th</sup> time. Jack saw cards fall like leaves from an autumn bough, he pictured them on the floor, face up and face down.

"This is a fact of nature, it cannot be cured, it cannot be overcome. All you can do is speak clearly -honestly- and let it wash over one hundred men, so that one of them may be able to comprehend you. You speak for and to the one percent, that is your role as a true artist," Blax said as the book rose and fell on his stomach as he breathed.

"I'm not much of an artist, that is more Jack's thing," Jack said speaking of Jack Three who had just completed the 12<sup>th</sup> labor of Hercules on the garage container in bone whites and aspen greys and mars blacks in viscous oil-based paints. He had used attic bronze and lapis blue in such small quantities that they had barely been noticed at all. But Jack Two had seen the man work -sweat about the neck, squint below the eyes, stains of food and blood in random ways of clothes days & days old- and Jack Two knew something was hatching inside him, half suspecting it was an egg placed there by a brood parasite. He would not say Jack Four's name but he saw the four chambered heart, the tally marks, the four directions and four Jacks themselves.

Jack Two tried to squint the eyes.

"No, no you are wrong. You are a great artist, a life artist, you have done great things and will do even grander things. No great artist is understood by the masses; and he often doubts himself. Even when the masses eventually catch up they take the wrong lesson.

"The Whale was hated at first, barely a thousand copies sold. It was panned as the ravings of a madman. And a hundred years later it was loved, loved for all that it was not, not loved for what had been opaque; loved only for the things the Author did not mean were understood and adored. You will be ignored and hated then loved finally long after your death and only for all the wrong reasons. They will ruin your art to justify their weak and stupid lives; they will say, *The Whale was a condemnation of Ahab*, when it was an exaltation as you rightly pointed out.

"They will get it all wrong, and yet, for all that, a man of what, eighteen years now?" Blax paused and raised his brow and opened the cowl that hooded his eyes so often.

Jack nodded as it was 2038, and he -alongside the Jacks- was -or was becoming- eighteen this year.

“Eighteen years old, a man born a hundred and twenty-seven years after The Author’s death, two hundred and one years after his birth, gets it, in a flash, like a *coup de foudre*, he gets it. And the particles of God’s lightning bolt align, condense, charge and find attraction and consilience with the ground and cloud and bam, it strikes a man down. And he recovers from this bolt a new man, a man of God, so to speak,” Blax said.

“What do you mean?” Jack asked as his face wrinkled up and he lowered the brow.

“See, our genome -yours and mine, and the Jacks- is predisposed to both belief and unbelief, we are natural born teleologists -we see meaning in all things- and yet we are skeptics and atheists, we find religion to be sillyass. So we are stuck. But, and this is what makes us different from both the credulous believer and the arrogant and shallow non-believer: we accept that some things are unknowable, and that our own power of reasoning is insufficient.

“We accept, we embrace and highlight what the religious don’t care about, and what the rationalists deny. We accept God’s law on grounds that modernity is bankrupt and hollow and evil. We don’t shun the ontological rubrics of evil like the rationalists, but we don’t apply it in a shallow way like the religionists. We accept that God killed children and committed genocide and burdened unfairly good men, we accept that God did all these things for good reasons that are beyond our ken.

“We accept that God is real, whether we believe in Him or not. We accept that His moral reasoning is not man’s reasoning. And that is something neither side will admit to. See, modern religious people just use their own moral logic and then search out a biblical verse to support it and pronounce their moral conclusion as God’s.

“They want to be modern and liberal and pacific, right? They want to think women in congress is progress, and abortion is a medical procedure, and race mixing is beautiful and lying all the time to save people’s feelings is good and making money is the pinnacle of all life. They think women having careers is good, men being cloyingly nice is good, and democracy is fair and being happy is the zenith of life.

“These are *their* values, not God’s. Now, maybe God is agnostic on some things, maybe. I don’t claim to know. I do know that if God exists, which as I get older, the more I assume He does, His morality isn’t anything like ours.

“See, and this took me a long time to figure out, and I think you already have, but, the more knowledge you get, plus the more time you have to synthesize it, the more strange ideas appear to make sense. We know for example that anti-poverty campaigns actually continue and entrench poverty, while capitalism eradicates it. This is a hundred percent opposite of what my former socialist self would have thought. It flies in the face of all logic; but time and data proved it. Capitalism lifts people from poverty, government handouts keep them there.

“First, leaving pain untreated actually causes more pain. The body reacts to pain after seven to twelve years by recruiting the immune system to attack and irritate the dorsal horn. So, you have to wipe out pain to keep pain at bay, you can’t half-ass it or it doubles. Well, next, not prescribing opiates - doctors refusing to treat pain- *leads* to deaths; it doesn’t save lives. This was found out early on. The doctor prescribed opiate deaths was merely seventy-eight hundred in the year you were born, barely more than deaths from bicycle accidents. It was the illegal access to pills, and in combination with booze and the use of heroin that killed people, not doctor prescribed narcotics; but everyone

thought doctors should stop their prescribing and so they clamped down hard.

“And the reason those people were on booze and black-market pills -spiked with Fentanyl- and heroin was because their doctor cut them off of normal monitored prescriptions. Man’s solutions are often backward, all backward. And because man lacks vision, it takes time and data to see he had it all wrong.

“Well, who has the most data, the most empirical data, who is all knowing?” Blax asked with a grin.

“Isaiah,” Jack said with flat affect as Blax grinned.

“But who has had the most time around the place, who is in fact ubiquitous, which just means always around in time, forward and backward, always?”

“God,” Jack said as he laughed.

“So, He will see just how, in just what way, that what man sees as moral is immoral, what man sees as up is down, what man sees as right is wrong. And that is just from data and time; the very same things man uses to improve his own policies, right? Time and data are used by mere mortals to fix hundred-year-old mistakes.

“That is why I think God exists even though I do not believe it the way I believe other things. I just assume that there is something beyond my capacity to reason, to perceive, to understand. That’s acatalepsy; I just assume I can’t know the truth. That is not the same as belief. I do not believe. But I think I am wrong, I think my agnosticism is wrong. I *know* my atheism was wrong, but I even suspect my agnosticism is in error now.

“Most men cannot believe both the thing and its opposite at once,” Blax said as he stretched the fingers below and jaw above.

“They can’t. I can. I can, I am able to, *not believe* in God and yet also think I am wrong and that He in fact exists. I hold both ideas at once. And I do it for all the reasons that would outrage the credulous religious and the soulless rationalists as well. I would be mocked by both sides for that way of being.

“But, I do not care, because I know that to pretend to believe would be blasphemy -and I will not blasphemy God- I have principles at stake here, principles the modern religious phony does not have. But, despite my unbelief, to foreclose on the likelihood of something more powerful, more wise, more regal than me is arrogant and unwarranted and stupid, and I refuse to be any more arrogant and stupid than I already am. I will not be stupid on purpose any longer than I have to.

“The fact that a universe exists at all is evidence of something odd, something beyond our comprehension,” Blax said and rubbed the back of his neck as the ache accrued to it during the day, adding to it and ascending each day like interest on a debt that was calculated right now. He’d sometime watch the pain inside his neck like arrow shot from the Mongol’s bow, around the globe following a western set of sun. He could see it travel in ecliptics and fletching made of ferric metals and broadhead of bronze. He saw ants on his dorsal horn like mound, biting it and burrowing down; tunnels that linked up between head and chest. He felt heat and cold, blood and bone, all morph and hold like boreal winters at the witching hour and deserted summers at noon of day.

He had lit the candles at dusk, and now watched their flames below the rim; glow the glass down and illuminate the tallow in orange overhead.

“Krauss showed how it can come from nothing though, right?” Jack asked as he further leaned on the bed and

smoothed the sheet down; made the hands warm weights.

“Oh, yeah I read that book three times, and it is amazing; he’s an amazing guy. Liberal douche and creep, but genius at one thing. He knows nothing of politics or how to treat people, but man he nailed that particle anti-particle on the lip of time-too-small-to-measure thing like a stud. But, even he cannot explain *why* there is anything at all.

“He admits that is not, was not, his task. He admits that. And that is my point: why anything at all?

“To even have anything is a deep mystery to anyone who is not a total shallow;” he corrected his language, “totally, shallow meat head. And I cannot shake the fact that it is odd that anything exists at all. It scares me, it reduces me to a kind of awe actually. So, as you can imagine I don’t think of it all that much. But when I do, I realize that my agnosticism is likely just a prelude to being wrong.”

Blax shut the fuck up for a second and looked about his little room. His drawings and paintings scattered about; he lamented how long it’d been since he made such art. Books overhanging the shelves, looking like they may fall. Bottles of wine strewn about, a ceiling white and walls a heather grey. He knew abandonment, he knew why too. Nobody trusted him, everyone thought he was up to no good. It wounded him but he had studied why. He accepted it the way women accept that their age would work against them in ways it doesn’t for men. He looked at Jack and saw his own face from a million years ago. And he did not covet it; he realized he did not want to live forever, not even if he was to live as a young man.

Blax knew he didn’t want to live in such a world as this. He wanted out and the cramped room made that feeling all the more acute. But he spoke anyway, as if it mattered, as if Jack would benefit from his next words. But he knew he said

it all to justify himself and that if he cared about the Jacks he'd not say another word.

"Like when I was agnostic about whether or not man was infinitely malleable; when I was a behaviorist type. I was wrong, right? I was wrong because genes matter a lot. But, I spent a few years thinking there was no essential difference between men and women and the races and on and on. And I couldn't just pretend to change my mind all in one leap, that would be, would've been phony; a lie.

"I had to spend some time in purgatory, where I was not in hell nor heaven, but studying on my sins. That's where I am now, on this deepest ontological question, and I suspect part of that process is admitting that God's law, His ideas on morality are likely opposite of ours; especially the modern ones. Our modern ideas," Blax said as the rain had begun to slap against the metal wall. He felt some relief at this and took each drop as music, as crescendo of rock falls he'd seen and heard long ago as he blew mountains apart and dug in the dirt like a dog. The rain sounded like history to him; the sound like applause.

"Yeah, I still cannot decide if the Author was saying that man has a right to rebel against God or not; the tropes are unclear," Jack added.

"Here's my idea, Ahab rebels against half of God, the Whale half, but that is the tyrant in God, not the chaos of God. The chaos of God is the sea in that book; for Milton it was more straightforward, but the Author had to make it more murky.

"See, the Whale is order, putting man in his place in the cosmic soup of the sea; and God must do this, for man is no hero according to the Author, man's out there rapacious and greedy and killing for luxury and modern frivolity. You remember how he derides men for their use of whale oil at great cost?" Blax asked as the candles were aglow in the corners of the room, remaining still as if he was trapped in



the amber of their light, as Jack recalled that part of the text.

"Oh, right, yeah, he says to be economical in oil use for it cost so much to achieve, right," Jack said and nodded in appreciation of this fleshing out of his analysis.

"Right, and so man is no innocent victim even by the Author's own lights," he winked at the double *entendre*, "and so God is embodied in the Whale to set these whalers straight, to push back against their greed. And it's the sea itself that is that chaos that man's strides into to discover himself and the world; and God. God pushed back, he -as the tyrant- restores order, balance to which Ahab rebels. It's his death that may signal that the Author is admitting that man cannot supersede the innate tyranny of nature, and that God is just nature's tyrant, elected by the cannibals of the sea to defend it against man's ascendancy.

"See, when man is in ascendance he disrupts the balance and so nature -like the immune system for example- fights back. And the pathogens fight against that fight and man kicks against the pricks, and all of life is a battle with each side thinking that history began with the first unrighteous - unfair- blow to their own face. No one, not man, not nature, not God, admits that he started it; he -all of us- say: *No, they, the other guy, started it*.

"The Author seems to admit this, he admits to being Ahab, to feeling what he feels, to rail against death as a concept of God's, as an unnecessary injustice of God's sanction on man, but, because he is not shallow, not some atheist who says stupid shit like, *well if God existed why does anyone die or why do children die or why is their injustice at all and blah blah*. No, because he is deep, he must admit that maybe man deserves it after all.

"The Author knew, seems to know, that man is no victim. Man is detestable, not just as joint-stock company and

nation, but even in the ideal, he is a murderer, a knave, a fool. He is mocking the idea that man is somehow sparkling and noble and a grand and glowing creature. But taken at face value, that paragraph seems democratic and to laud mankind. But it is a trick, and we know this because of his own letters to Hawthorne where he admits as much. Author's sometimes say opposite of what they mean, people forget that. I don't forget it," Blax said and though each candle looked a Mount Aetna and he an *Empedocles* .

"Look, Ahab is a tyrant, the Whale -an instantiated God- is a tyrant, and society itself is tyrannical too -the Author made certain we knew that in about a hundred and one places, right?" Blax asked and stretched his shoulders trying to move away from the neck pain, but all it did was distract him with sensations in other parts of the back and arms. His hands were going numb again, his feet were hot at bottom. His ribs hurt and he breathed shallow and the book's spine barely moved on his core.

"Definitely," Jack agreed. His own hand smoothed the bed again, he watched the black *duvet* flatten and rise in waves and he watched the man's feet and then the flames from the candles give the bedspread shadows. His own thumb had scars on the edge like a seam. A vein as green as an Ohio sky ran from thumb to past the first knuckle of his index finger and over and down around.

"Ok, but Ahab also has humanity, deep humanity, and the Whale -God- has His point too. The Whale isn't wrong, those whalers are trying to kill him, and he's defending himself and all the other gods, all the other whales that modern man was killing like madmen, functional atheists, right? I mean the Author was saying that modern man is killing all that is sacred out there, if the trope of the Whale is God, then the other whales are the many faces or offspring or ancestors of God, all that is sacred in the world.

“So, the Whale is God saying, *hey, you are not going to get away with murdering all that is sacred with impunity.* Lastly, society has a right to maintain order, they have to maintain order in the face of all that chaos of the watery part of the world. And there is no natural or right balance, there’s only what each element is capable of. What is nature capable of, what can she do? Private vice leads to public virtue, right? What’s society capable of, what will it sanction, and what -in the end- will each man do, what *can* he do, what will he see clearly, morally, with sharp eyes and a mind that can see past convention and man’s -his fellow man’s- folly?

“That is the question, because God has given birth to it all, and we must make decisions under opacity, we cannot know it all. We must reason with something akin to humility but righteousness too. It’s not easy, unlike the easy moral logic of both the religious and the atheist. Both of them know exactly what to do, the religious just picks the parts of the Bible he already agrees with and does that; and if he fails and transgresses he just asks for forgiveness and Jesus forgives it all.

“The atheist just follows society’s dictates and blows in the wind to whatever liberal *cause celebre* is popular. Nobody - nobody but the one percent- actually thinks they might be wrong. And it is here, in this purgatory of error, where man - if he is courageous- can act in ways that vex him, in ways that *feel* wrong, but he suspects might in fact be right; it’s the anti-conscience; it’s doing what is right against the wrong-headed conscience that is weak and stupid and immoral but thinks it is in fact the voice of morality.

“The Author got that, I think; look at Starbuck, he thinks he is right, he thinks he is moral, he has this sick and weak conscience, *mere unaided virtue* is the phrase the Author uses. And Starbuck is wrong, wrong man, but it’s his sweet little Christian conscience that everyone to this day thinks is

right; and everyone thinks that he is the good guy in the book. It's a joke, a sick joke, Starbuck is a coward and immoral and like all modern liberals thinks he is in fact right and pure and on and on. And the reader goes along with this fraud.

"I think he -the Author- got that real men must act in accordance with their role, not their conscience," Blax said as if this was just another line within a paragraph within a speech within a life of speeches. But when he thought about it this was likely the sentence he'd have carved into stone above his bones when they sloughed off all that tawdry flesh.

"I think that conscience is infected with society's taint, real men act in a manner as laid out by God and Nature, against his own fear, hesitation, moral preening and cowardice. A real man does the hard thing, not the thing he knows -he thinks he knows- in his modern mind is right. He kills when it pains him, he takes away liberties even when it feels wrong, he is loyal to the man most hated by everyone, he abandons the man most loved. And because it's his nature to do so.

"And maybe he fights God and dies for the cause. Maybe he fights his hardest against the tyranny of nature and loses in a spectacular way, and earns God's respect and takes the weak and craven and some part of the noble savage down with him, and what emerges is just a more complete man, a revealed man, a man like Ishmael, who is half he and half *Queequeg* and can return to the world with that knowledge, that breastplate knowledge, that heart wisdom, that regal and royal capacity in hand, part ink quill, part scepter and part har-fucking-poon," as he said it the words hit Jack Two's ears and chest and like a concussive blast seemed to flatten his skin and features as Blax felt his own face contract and

his eyes wet, and his chest heave and he felt God's power inside him, just behind the eyes.

He convulsed, and this shocked Jack and he lifted his arm quickly, out and in front as if to offer it, and maybe ward off this display of emotion too. But Jack's heart took the blast, of this there was no doubt. He felt a diminution of something in him, as if this was not his time on earth, as if he and two more Jacks would have to pass and only one of the four stay. *The loyalty, the soldier of Jack One*, he thought, *the creativity and artfulness of Jack Three*. He tried to think of what made Jack Four Jack Four and he slipped away. He had him faced, then flanked, then he was turned the other way.

"Which are we LT, are we society or we outlaw?" Jack then asked as if it might staunch the wet wound of his Captain's eyes and remove the irritant of the ineffable nature of the fourth Jack from his own side.

"Well, time is discrete," Blax said, attempting to pull himself together, using words as suture for he knew that Jack Four was not as forgiving as the rest for Blax's weakness of emotion and he felt Jack Four was somehow watching through Jack Two's eyes, "as a discrete thing in some ways, but in others it is not. If time is discrete then on December 31<sup>st</sup> 1958 the July 26<sup>th</sup> movement were *outlaws* and the next day, New Year's day, 1959, they were *society*, they were the *law* .

"If time is discrete then on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776, the colonists were outlaws and then on May 12<sup>th</sup> 1789 when the constitution was ratified they were society. But if time is a potential, an analog phenomenon not a digital one, then each group were always both outlaws and society at all times. And I suspect we are no different than that.

"And to know that, to know what man is, what a great man truly is, even to recognize its avatar in myth, literature, in

drama, is to become a man-of-God, to fuse with God in that moment, to be part of the base pair, one asp in the caduceus staff, one particle or anti-particle, one hemisphere of the brain.

"You are God in that moment, humbly, penitent, a child-of-God, neither outlaw or lawman, but both, and this is the nature of God. To be both at all times," Blax said and was shaken by this, by the weight of what he was asked to do. He hurt, physically, his body was riven and broken and compressed.

The heart -the body- inside the crash.

His heart was moth eaten and his blood poisoned with lost love. He was a born idealist, and no modern man of reason could ever understand how hard it was to be a romantic, a poet, an idealist in the modern world where everything was reduced to fungibility, and pragmatism and re-sale value. No one saw the tragedy of being an atavistic man in the modern world. Society just assumed you could catch up; as if it were a matter of knowledge or time and not principle itself.

Jack didn't know, he just lifted that arm by some instinct, by some power outside of him as he watched his Lt, his father, his brother, himself, shake and vibrate in place, upright, with dignity and refusing to give in to the pain. He did not collapse in tears, he did not rebuke them either, he felt them, allowed them a brief moment to show their face too; to reveal the ocean sloshing inside him, like the tide, just coming in for a moment then back out again.

Jack then let the arm fall and used it to push himself up out of the floor and nod, respectfully, and turn to go. He left the room and did not look back. He felt neither anger nor sadness; he felt neither love nor hate. He just felt that Fedallah had given Ahab good advice, God's advice, and it had led to Ahab's merciful death. Jack felt no malice, almost

no malice, he merely felt it was time to take the advice - from a great man- to be himself, which might include being nothing at all; to evaporate.

Blax gathered himself, stoically, unembarrassed by this display, but uninterested in letting it devolve into a cataract of tears and blubbering and thus blinked to clear the distortion of the water in *lieu* of wiping the tears from the black lashes and tenebrous eyes.

## **II. 2018 e.v.**

The *nanobots* that had hovered around each registered voter who received a packet, which was 87% on the day of the debate, had synthesized their specific payload and were waiting in abeyance for the 2000hrs debate.

They were encoded to spray aerosols of the exact bio-chemistry necessary for each voter to feel positively toward the candidate. His voice in the room -*via* the TV- would activate the *bots* and their algorithmic codes.

First MO determined that he would garner 22% of the electorate without any help at all. Then he adjusted the chems at each edge of each voter's personality. He would nudge from the lab the voter at home while the next Governor was live on TV.

Boyd thought of watching her die. He hardly did that anymore; it had been decades. But tonight he thought of it; in detail; of her, his sister, and the way she was soft with him, listened to him, never rebuked or rebelled; treated him like a god, *or a pharaoh maybe* , he thought. He pushed it; corralled it. *There was plenty of time for that later* , he thought. Now, he had a job to do -prolong and improve life; *that is where dignity lay, in staving off entropy, not succumbing to it* , he thought as his stomach felt both empty and bloated.

He nodded at his own internal dialogue and as his handlers and adjuncts and apparatchiks and managers all came to him with last minute advice and memetic aids and reminders of how to debate professional politicians, he nodded but ignored them and heard not one word. He had a staff, a coterie of people, so that he seemed to be playing a regular game, but it was a *façade* ; he was playing the game for himself and he had something the others did not.

As the debate went live on television and the web, each person watching at home, on the bus or in DIA waiting for their flight, the packet they had received in the mail -as all registered voters received- would tailor an olfactory targeted aerosol so fine -so ephemeral- that nobody would notice a thing. And inside that cocktail would be a genetically specific combination of oxytocin and vasopressin and androgens or epinephrine or endogenous opiates. They would breathe in the precursory chemicals to produce a feeling that each man natural feels when they are in the presence of someone their own body has determined is worthy of trust and affinity.

*The body , Boyd Sou thought, releases chemicals like this each time a person makes eye contact, smells pheromones, has an orgasm, shakes a hand, hears a word, a phrase, an idea from another person and these are bio-chemical building blocks of a man's instincts, and who a man likes, dislikes, trusts or mistrusts. Most men think it is some magical intuitive state, but it is just chemistry, and it's regulated by a man's sub-cortical regions, who know -based upon ancient heuristics- the best plan to move forward in the world.*

*If a man or a woman gives another person an orgasm, then they get a bump of oxytocin, for example, and one is more likely to trust them, and even fall in love .*



*If someone says something a man already likes, agrees with, or has resonance with -shit, their own name even- they get a small dump of vasopressin, opioid ligands like beta-endorphins, enkephalins or dynorphins released by and into the listener's brain. This is the foundation, the substrate of all emotional life, and the basis for whom each man likes, befriends, loves and marries and who that man votes for as well. Anyone who knows basic endocrinology and neuroanatomy will tell you this is true,* he thought as he stared at the void. He wasn't really cheating if you thought about it -he thought- he was just manipulating them with the same chemicals that most politicians manipulate through tricks of language; Boyd merely skipped that part -told the truth- and accessed their biochemistry designed to induce trust directly. *Well, some truth* , he thought.

*It is just until today,* the candidate thought, *all those chemicals had to be induced naturally, with behaviors and stimulus, manipulations the old-fashioned way, with smiles, and cloying behavior and commercials on TV that made oblique references to sex .*

*The idea that you vote for someone based upon their policies,* the candidate thought, *is a long ago debunked myth.*

*The candidate's ideas might make you feel good, that is true. But, you vote for them based upon how you feel, not what you think. The rational actor theory has been so thoroughly destroyed that anyone who still thinks they invest in something or someone based upon rational analysis is not just a fool, but dangerously so.*

*Your emotions decide what you think, not the other way around,* he thought as the crowd began to clap and the PA announced: *90 seconds-to-air* . Backstage he noticed the folds in the curtain. The way it was red on the peaks and black in the dips, and the length to this massive stage.

MO ran down the protocol: as Boyd Sou spoke each viewer would get a cocktail designed to do one of three things. Initially, those who had a pre-disposition to like him, measured in fealty and affinity metrics that had been gathered for eight to twelve weeks prior to the debate by measuring how they naturally responded to a battery of phenomena in their lives -from interactions with foreigners, men or women, blacks and whites, their disgust sensitivity, their willingness to say controversial things or how they responded to such things in others- via *their cerebellum* , *limbic and neo-cortical* regions, first they would be mapped and tagged.

1. They were analyzed for receptivity to his main message and placed in *tier one* .

Once this baseline was determined, the *bot* -using a threshold and plasticity algorithm- made a determination of how far they could be moved toward voting for him or away. Those that were determined to be within 84.5% valence with him were these *tier one* voters; they would naturally or easily vote for him with almost no bump at all. A 100% valence would be a perfect match. A 0% valence would be complete opposites; incompatible in every way.

Level two were those within 52.5% valence and they could be moved without any cognitive dissonance, in other words, they could be pushed with higher chemical induction, and manipulation, without crossing the line into it feeling unnatural, nor into a phenomenon that they could not explain if asked by friends or family to justify their affinity for the man. With *tier-one* and *two* voters he would garner another thirteen points in his favor, putting him at 35%.

They -in a three-way race- were shooting for a 44% threshold to be safe by 5%. That meant 9% of voters would need something pushing beyond the limits of persuasion and would require not just bio-chemistry but logic, *post hoc*

rationales to prevent cognitive dissonance that might prevent the voter from actually voting how they had been induced to feel.

That was a problem for which MO had designed three possible solutions. He felt that all three would be ready in 2019, and by the election in 2022, he was certain that all phases would be 96.1% perfect. But now -in 2018- when the first election was taking place, he had only one option, and it involved the brute force application of bonding chemicals that would make the previously anti-Boyd voter -in those 10% of cases- slightly mad and borderline psychotic in their feelings of valence for Boyd Sou.

They would feel a >99% valence, that is to say, they would feel they were soul mates with the man. They would feel redeemed by his existence and each word, each gesture, each thing he did and failed to do would resonate with them so perfectly as to blur the line between these voters and the man running for Governor of Colorado in November of 2018. They'd go from hating him to worshipping him and MO would do it by harnessing the same exact intensity and merely reversing it with brute force.

It was inelegant, but it would get them their 9%.

It was an unfortunate and risky strategy, but it was unavoidable.

It was September of an election year, and the man needed to be Governor in order to implement their plans for the of PraXis Corporation, and it was -in fact- MO's highest priority as outlined by his internal algorithm and the architecture of his CNS. He was incapable of questioning his purpose; he was on a mission -for all intents and purposes- from the gods.

The lights *back of house* were dim and amber, and Sou stood erect and stoically as his girls sat in the front row

between the cousin of the Democrat candidate, Jared Polis and the three brothers of the Republican, Walker Stapleton. He imagined them there in his mind and smiled and breathed. His PGC released a beta blocker to reduce nerves, and a mild amphetamine to reduce any soporific side-effect from the *diazepam* he had taken earlier. His testosterone was augmented by 90-points.

The moderators called his name, introducing him and then the stage manager motioned him forward to the curtain; he strode and smiled at the stagehand as she nodded and told him, *good luck* .

He took his station at the lectern and looked out at the crowd; the house light were still up on the 1,800 people in the auditorium, and the back row with national media represented was gauzy and grey to his eyes. He had made a number of controversial remarks and brought national attention back in June and now he had forced the debate commission to rent out a hall twice the size of a normal Colorado gubernatorial debate. He was at 30% in the aggregate polls; but he was being opposed on the Right by some religious groups who felt his genomic augmentation proposal was irreligious and he was hated on the Left by illegal immigrant groups like CIRC and thus security -his own personal outfit and the state funded marshals- were walking the halls and rows looking at hands and sometimes eyes.

The moderators from the *Denver Post* and *Channel 9News* began by a mention of the national media and a small rebuke for their lack of interest in other things besides marijuana and Boyd Sou's love life as they thanked the hosts and the candidates. With low chuckles and some chagrin felt -as Boyd pointed to his girl in the front row feeling that they were implicitly mentioned- the crowd made itself part of the event. Even the brothers of Stapleton looked to their right and smiled at Boyd's two girlfriends as

they sat there beaming and in black and grey 3-piece suits with skirts in *lieu* of slacks.

“Gentlemen, the nation has many issues, and Colorado is illustrative on many of those. Tonight, we hope to focus on three topics of interest to voters. Education, Crime and Health Care. We start with Jared Polis, the Democratic nominee in 2018,” the moderator from the local newspaper began.

“Mr. Polis, you have stated that you support a national assault weapons ban and have proposed one for Colorado. What is your response to those that oppose such measures and say that they are mere window dressing?” the moderator asked.

“Good evening Melissa and Robert,” Mr. Polis said, nodding to the moderators, “and thank you to the University of Denver and all the people here and at home watching. I have served the state of Colorado for nearly twenty years, beginning as a member of the Colorado State Board of Education and as a State Representative for the last ten years; and I am proud to call this state my home. I am familiar with Boyd’s position on the issue and Mr. Stapleton’s, and I can say Coloradoans have a clear choice.

“My opponents want to allow these weapons of war into our schools and communities and are fully bought and paid for by the gun lobby. Rocky Mountain Gun Owners has given Boyd Sou an A rating on his position and have given Stapleton an A-minus. Their only rebuke is that he does - shockingly- support a ban on the gun show loophole. But, beyond that, I am the only candidate that supports keeping kids safe from these guns that nobody needs in America or Colorado,” Polis said and remembered to smile as he was instructed beforehand. His Chief of Staff was happy that the candidate had remembered to use the phrase, *weapons of war* , because that poll-tested well. The CoS felt that the

smile and use of the moderators first names was also checked off her list of debate-goals. The use of the word *Colorado* was also apt, designed as it was to manipulate people into tying their state with his voice at the subconscious level.

She had a tablet with these things listed and she checked them off.

The hall applauded and quieted quickly, their response as perfunctory as his. The moderators asked Sou to respond.

“I’m not a politician, and so, the way I speak will not be as careful or scripted as my opponents. They will use key words like *children* and *weapons of war* and *communities* and *gun lobby*. They will use words like *home*, *family*, *faith*, *common sense solutions*, *growth* and on and on. These words are all poll-tested, approved by Madison avenue firms that sell you toothpaste and cars and cigarettes. These firms also sell you politicians and because each side does this, neither of them mention how dishonest and phony it is.

“Well, I will mention it. It’s dishonest and phony, ok?” he said with a genuine smile.

The crowd laughed with some equally genuine mirth. Slight boos came from the donor class of the establishment candidates, but the moderators asked them all to simmer down.

“Now, here’s some facts. Four people were killed by rifles - so-called assault rifles- in Colorado in 2017. Four. That makes rifles less dangerous than spoons. As spoons killed six people. I can’t mention in good conscience the carnage brought about by sporks ladies and gentlemen,” he paused as they laughed, “but to ban assault weapons is a stupid liberal trick designed to make you think they are doing something. These same people allow illegal aliens to avoid

prosecution and deportation by the thousands and yet they want to take your guns.

“There are over 3,000 illegal aliens in our jails right now, and of those -71% will commit crimes after being released into our state- and they are some of the worst recidivist criminals within the four corners of the Colorado territory. Illegal aliens committed 25,000 of the 61,000 murders in the US between 2012 and 2015. That is not a number easily glossed over. Almost half of all murders are by illegals. Much more than the four committed with rifles.

“And yet the liberals focus on the four murders with rifles and the nearly half committed by illegals go undefended against. In fact the Denver Sheriff -currently- won’t even hold illegals when ICE issues a retainer. And they release illegals already charged with a crime into our state with no consequences at all. Imagine that, they let criminal aliens go free after they have them in custody.

“And that is A-Ok to Mr. Polis here, but you -according to his plans- you the normal American cannot have a gun. That is their philosophy today. Now this is America, you can have any philosophy you like, it’s an individual choice. But the facts we share, those are not individual property where you get your facts and I get mine. No, we share the facts and the facts are that illegal aliens are ten thousand times more dangerous than so called assault weapons and the Democrats are doing nothing to stop it. In fact, they,” Sou was interrupted by the moderator, but he kept speaking to finish the sentence, “they are making it worse, Colorado had a 10% increase in violent crime last year. 10%.”

“Mr. Stapleton, you have five minutes,” the moderator said.

“Thank you,” he went on in a drone in *de rigueur* Republican talking points with words like *freedom* and *tax reform* and *sanctuary cities*. He used phrases like *judicial activism* and *local control* and *vouchers* , and he grudgingly agreed with

Boyd Sou on the gun question, but amended it to say that he -Stapleton- was the only one with any experience standing up for gun owners and so on and so forth. He finished his boilerplate speech to milquetoast applause.

Each time the issues were raised the establishment candidates rattled off the phrases designed to manipulate people with words that were in fact poll-tested for their positive attributes; it was crass and old-fashioned manipulation of people by using words both vague -to avoid controversy- and warm -to make people feel good- and signified nothing at all.

This went on as Boyd mentioned the 300,000 illegals in Colorado right now and the 14% of the jail population being illegal and how this cost Colorado \$72-million a year. The school costs were another \$400 million and that it was \$1.5 billion total to house, feed, clothe, educate and incarcerate illegals. And yet nobody, as he mentioned, was willing to do anything to stop it. The hall at the University of Denver held them all, but Boyd's voice seemed to hold each man and woman in a state of slight reverie; he seemed to speak directly to them, they felt. The speaking style was genuine, because he meant it, and the *nanobots* delivery of *biochems* was being absorbed at 67% of the expected uptake according to MO's sample study. It was low, but he felt it was sufficient to still change the required amount of minds.

MO monitored each viewer at home as the dispersal *bots* also took metabolic readings every 4.4 seconds to allow for any adjustment and for future database records.

"They talk tough on the political right," Boyd said, "but they won't do E-verify because their corporate donors *want* illegal alien labor to keep labor costs down, and the political left talks about each illegal as some modern day Heratio Alger, some kid solving the equations that will cure cancer or something. This is asinine.



“\$1.5-billion it costs us. That’s real money, even to me,” he said with a grin as the *bots* released more genomic specific *chems* into the air around the nostrils and mouth of each voter watching it live and at home.

“Look, I’m going to tell you a little story. Bear with me, ok?” Boyd said as he tilted the head slightly to the right so that the viewer would tilt theirs to the left and activate the right hemisphere.

“Ants use a pheromone system that instructs them on what to do. They bury their dead, by removing the corpse and taking it to the edge of the colony. The way they know how to do this is by a pheromone released by the ant body at time-of-death, a pheromone then breathed in and picked up in the sensory organs of the living ants. Now, E.O. Wilson discovered this and was able to artificially extract the pheromone from the dead ant and wipe it on a living ant and the other living ants were fooled by this and the living ant with the death-pheromone wiped all over him by that mean-ol’-scientist was thus -sure enough- picked up like a casket by six ant pall-bearers and buried by the diligent worker ants who are designated by nature to take out the corpses of the fallen for the good of the hive.

“Now, it is true that this undead-ant kicked and flailed as they carried him, but this impacted the pall-bearer ants in their task not all; they buried him alive. Because the way they make decisions is based purely on these pheromones which are similar to smell. These chemicals gave them all the information they needed in order to make a decision. And ants are one of only eleven eusocial species on the planet. As are men; you and I.

“I tell you this story so you understand, these people, these politicians are as ignorant and single-minded as ants. They base all their decisions on what is poll-tested and approved by focus groups and their donors. They cannot -for the life of

themselves or for your life- they cannot think for themselves. They will bury you -and this state- alive. Folks, they will do it while you kick and scream all the way to the grave.

"They do not care that you are tax payers, citizens, residents, moms and dads and fellow Americans. They do not care. They smell that pheromone slathered on you by illegals or corporations or the media and they take you out to the edge to be thrown away while criminals and illegals and greedy businesses destroy this great state.

"I have a program, a working algorithm and medical intervention that will eliminate 80% of all crime," the candidate -adjusting his voice slightly, deepening it, said. This was the other thing the national media was here for, the man and his corporation, PraXis, had issued a press release six months before the election that claimed they could -using CRISPR-cas9- change the brains of criminals and reintegrate them into society.

It was *avant-garde* and salacious and bizarre.

"Now, we know that 80% of all crime is committed by 20% of the population, this is a known fact. And 25% of those people are sociopathic or psychopathic; that is to say one in four criminals have bad brains. They are like people with the equivalent of a disease that causes them to sneeze and cough and throw up all over you. You ever around a guy that's sick? It is no fun, and folks, these sick people when they sneeze, well, it's a gun shot, when they cough, it's a rape, when they throw up, it's burning down an apartment building full of women and children and pets.

"And I can cure it," he then said as his voice modulated again. The crowd was breathing in a way that sounded a lot like gasping. He didn't speak like normal politicians. And he didn't seem to care if he didn't fit it at all.

"I -my team and I- have at PraXis corporation the cure to psychopathy. I can cure it. And while criminals who do the worst crimes cannot be released, it is a fact that many of them *will* be released no matter who wins this race; and if they are not cured while incarcerated then once they are released they will re-offend. And we know that the recidivism rate is 50%; and even worse, among the worst criminals that re-offend rate is 90%. We are doing nothing but playing whack-a-mole here. We are arresting and releasing and re-arresting over and over and thus -ladies and gentlemen- tonight I propose two things.

"First, we track and deport all illegals -all 300,000 of them in the State of Colorado tonight- in my first term, that will eliminate 10% of all crime. Then I propose we begin with a pilot program to medically intervene to fix the damaged brains of criminals to make them empathetic and decent again so that when they are released they do no re-offend.

"And I will, PraXis Corporation will pay for this; the state of Colorado will not pay one dime to this program. I will pay it; it's the least I can do for this great state," as he spoke the oxytocin released to his target audience made them trust him implicitly and feel warm and hopeful and mildly -to moderately- fraternal.

*If not outright in love*, MO thought as he watched the screen in the lab.

For those opposed to him, whose ideology or temperament was too estranged, using oxytocin would augment their hatred, not increase trust, so MO used an algorithm in the *bots* that reduced their levels of these particular *biochems* to mute their negative feelings. These voters still disagreed with him but felt no visceral hatred or anger as they normally would have; and would have felt more of if given the bonding chem the *tier one* and *two* folks got. They felt disagreement but no heat; dislike bit no hatred.

“All rev like a motor, but no torque converter,” MO said aloud.

This was true for all but 1.1% who had their biochemistry augmented to turn them into raving maniacs who hated Boyd Sou so much they rose from their chairs at home and screamed at the TV. These people would be the catalyst for street demonstrations and insane testimonials in the press and on TV. This 1.1% was lamented by MO at first, but he measured second order effects over time, and he liked the gilding of the lily in this *one percenter* kind-of way. It had a flare that he liked. And the math supported it too.

These unhinged people -made so by the *nanobots* and their augmented *bio-chems* - would make the candidate look like the victim to the hatred of the worst of the worst.

It would actually increase his polling by 4% which MO felt might be the threshold for victory.

Sou spoke plainly, with some humor and offered to pay for things himself. He said he took no outside money -which was true- and that he didn't want a salary at all. He told them that they deserved the \$1.5 billion in costs that went to illegals to instead go to *their* kids, *their* hospitals for *them* . And he said, that to treat the sick psychopaths would also free up law-enforcement -currently tracking and dealing with the effects of illegals, instead of dealing with the crime of native-born psychopathic men and women in 2018 and beyond- to solve homegrown crime. He compressed the time line a bit, to simplify, as the benefits would not take hold until at least two or three years later, but, he made time seem like it was on their side if he won, and against them if he did not.

“In closing, let me say that we have home grown criminals, and yet they get treated worse than illegal alien criminals. I'm not advocating for crooks here folks, but if any crooks are going to get our help should it not be American crooks

and not illegal alien crooks?" he asked. The audience laughed and nodded as more *chems* were released in the auditorium under each man and woman's nose; their genome had been run as they entered before the debate and now the correct admixture -designed by MO- loaded into the waiting *bots* that hovering on the wings of the auditorium for 89-minutes- did their job.

The crowd was already 25% with him and with the boost of *chems* that rose to 40%. They laughed harder, with more mirth, and applauded with joy not obligation. Even his opponents sat mildly and disagreed with no elevation to heart rate, epinephrine, or cortisol as would have normally happened in order to sear his missteps into their memory. His errors or abrading ideas found no purchase in their foggy brains. They did not agree, but they found it hard to oppose.

In fact they would have a hard time remembering what they disagreed with at all, and while he would not get their vote then or on election day, they were not as opposed to him as they once thought.

MO watched the live feed on his monitor and tracked the room and the biometric data from the 1.9 million *bots* scattered around Colorado as 16% -then 19% and then 31%- of people tuned into the broadcast. It was viral on Twitter and Facebook and had picked up another 121,393 viewers in-state by the end. Boy Sou had almost 832,040 people watching live and over the next six weeks an additional 514,229 in state views. MO had noticed that 1.7 million out-of-state views were captured on YouTube, 922,746 on BitChute, but he had no access to these viewers bio-metrics.

"*Par ahora* ," MO said aloud.

MO had no *bots* in place out of state. But the videos had 28,657 up votes and only 2,584 downs. So even without the augmenting *chems* Boyd Sou seemed popular; *although it*

*would* , MO surmised, *be skewed white male and populist - as Boyd himself was seen- due to YouTube's and BitChute's native audience.*

MO felt that they would -in the next six weeks of the campaign- capture 1.01 million of the likely 2.5 million voters. MO would also factor in that that number -the official polling number- would low, due to Sou's unconventional politics and personal life making him taboo to support publicly, and MO surmised from the bio-metric data that Sou -at the end of this process- would get 45.6% of the vote in a three-way race, leading the second place finisher Jared Polis by almost 15% full points.

MO tracked the TV news views that showed clips of Boyd speaking and measured the response to those clips among registered voters and his metrics held steady; the endocrine and *limbic* region augments were bumping his support by 10%-15% from baseline while also muting dissent. This would suppress some of the anti-candidate voting, who would not be sufficiently outraged to vote *against* him.

MO figured this would be good for suppressing 4.1% of the total turn out.

As moment built, and sensing a runaway victory the media began running hit pieces on Sou, claiming his girls were *slaves* and that feminists should oppose this atavist sexual arrangement. They made common cause with religious fanatics who agreed it was untoward and unclean; unChristian, pagan, and wrong.

Boyd -at a town-hall meeting- had addressed the religious folks by reading from the Bible on King David with his twelve wives; Solomon with a hundred. He quoted Deuteronomy 21:5 and mentioned Jacob with his two wives and two concubines, and ended by saying he, Boyd Sou had been being less greedy than these men by just -merely- having the two.

Secular media laughed from their heads not their hearts, orthodox Jews bit their tongues, the few Muslims paying attention grimly said, *Inshallha* , facile supporters nodded in agreement and shallow Christians merely got mad.

The more outspoken Christians said that Sou's justifications were, *Old Testament stuff* , and they added that Jesus had forbade polygamy outright. But Sou reminded them - alongside the Christian *remarry* rate- that in the New Testament divorce was not allowed, for to remarry was considered polygamy too; he quoted Luke 16:18 and First Corinthians 7:10-11. When they hastily argued he calmly quoted Matthew 5:32:

*But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery and who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*

Sou's knowledge of scripture -thanks to his PGC- was such that they found it wise to adjust vector and thus to use logic instead of precedent.

These Christians said that modern relationships had to be between one man and one woman and Sou responded by saying, *well, we -myself and my paramours- are not technically married for this very reason and because I don't want to commit a felony just -merely- to avoid the sin of living with a woman or two.*

"Rules are rules," he said with no hint that he was joking around.

The press conference and town hall meetings and impromptu debates on streets and steps around Denver and the Springs were a whine of digital cameras and bleating reporters and the objections of the religious and feminists and traditionalists alike. But he claimed to be more traditionalist than they were -they only going back 500

years and he going back 3000- and he said that they were thus the modern philistines, liberals, secularists -not him- and as he said these things people both laughed and shook their heads too.

“Look, traditionally, a strong man, a king or rich man had more than one wife; that is the traditional view. It was much later, much later, that regular men each got a girl and the best men -the chieftain and warlord- was forced to have the same as the common man. I tell you, know your Bible, your history, Solomon and King David and Jacob and all of them had many -many- wives. *Temujin* had ten thousand and Wilt Chamberlin did too,” he said with a friendly smile.

Rachel sat in their bedroom and watched the debate.

She too thought he might be a kind of communist, using the state to change the man, and using the changed man to build a utopian world. But all the details were wrong, he was rich, and illiberal, and so Rachel thought instead of the big issues and read on the history of each of communism’s most famous men. And if one looked at it that way, the man about to be elected to office was cut from the same cloth as those early 20<sup>th</sup> century communists. Sou too -like *Lysenko* - believed in radical science. Like *Lenin* -she thought- Boyd thought the State must be in the hands of, *he -the man- of the grand plan* , and similar to Trotsky he felt that the Army - or law enforcement- should be focused on policing the borders of the State for anything foreign or counter-revolutionary.

Lastly -like Marx himself- Boyd countenanced the governing of the consciousness -*the false consciousness*, as Marx put it- of each individual man. She then realized there was one additional thing; one more, *lastly* .

*And*, Rachel thought as her readings backed filled each of her questions becoming conclusions, *like Stalin, the Governor believed in breaking a few eggs* .



For the media Boyd Sou made good copy and sold a lot of online ads and kept the Denver Post from going under until 2024 e.v. and as much as he annoyed the establishment, they reflexively covered each word.

Boyd had said that Walker Stapleton -the Republican running under a banner of family values- was a *divorcee* and because he was in a modern marriage with a divorced woman he was thus -by Biblical standards- an adulterer. Boyd Sou then added that Mr. Polis was gay. So, the religious vote would have to choose between himself, or an *adulterer* , or a *homosexual* ; and that he -never having been married and nor had his girls- as mere *fornicator* was the least in offense to the canon of God's law. The crowd did not laugh as loudly as people at home would when that particular town-hall meeting received 1.4 million views -and over a million guffaws- on YouTube; and then a million more on BitChute when YouTube took it down and censored the clip.

Rachel had recalled how she felt as she took the microphone that night; as she watched the video one more time.

It was after the jockeying and joking around -after the arguing and the defense- that Rachel came forward and asked to give a speech -*offer a thought or two* , she had said- and the room quieted and deferred to her tiny presence and taciturn demeanor and ways of a woman thus womanly.

It was as if a sick person was speaking to a room of the healthy; they gave her the deference one might give to the beast that is the last of its kind.

"I met Boyd Sou five years ago when I was just seventeen," she began with a voice soft enough that it reflexively pulled the ears of the room's men and women like phototropic flower bells toward a bright moon, not a noon sun. They strained and tipped and then held still. "I had graduated

high school early with a 4.0 GPA and was pre-enrolled in college at UC metro. We didn't have much money and my parents were divorced and living in sperate states. Often this is the case today as most marriages now fail; so I didn't think too much about it. I grew up insecure and felt the pain of not having a father, and a mother who was not at home much as she pursued her own interest; but I didn't think it was abnormal, just the normal growing pains of this life, if that makes sense."

As she spoke she watched her own hands and her feet sometimes too. She didn't feel comfortable looking at so many people at once. She only looked at the room of reporters and flunkies and apparatchiks after she asked a question. She saw them blink and nod here and there; she still thought maybe they were human, capable of human emotions and so she spoke with the vulnerability that attends such belief.

"I focused on school and my own self-improvement and one day Boyd came to my high school to speak.

"He had told us of his work in the field of medical genomics and how much potential there was," she felt her voice go a bit and so she paused and cleared her throat. Boyd hearing each syllable, each pause and dactyl, each sound either low like pea-gravel or rise like a cowbell, noticed the catch in the throat and offered her his glass of water that he had picked up as she began. But she demurred with the shake of the head and the raise of the hand just at waistline and turned back -from Boyd's gesture- to the room and started up again, "this potential kinda hit me then and I must say strikes me now as being what this man, my man, our man," she corrected her syntax and turned to Harrissa slightly and then offered her hand which the other young woman held with a stretch of their arms and fingers and she then -with her little feet- walked up toward Rachel and closed the gap

between them, “Well, I still think that is what he is all about.”

“Potential,” she said and breathed heavier into the microphone than she thought she might. The sound was loud -like wind- and she pulled back and held her breath for a moment to let it subside.

“He believes in people; despite the way many people fail, despite his own failures and the failures of all of us in his world. He always speaks as if failure can be overcome with the application of enough spirit, and intelligence, and love. He once told me love is something you *do* not just something you *feel*. He is committed to fixing the worst among us, the people nobody loves, the people most reviled, and often justifiable so. He doesn’t think they are good people; he thinks they can become good people.

“But these people -the criminals and vagrants and mentally insane- are still humans, and they are our fellow citizens, and he has not given up on them. And if he can not, if he is able to not give up on the worst of the worst, then I suggest the rest of us not give up on them either. Jesus said that it was the criminal and wretch that he ministered to. In Mark 2:17 Jesus said it was not the healthy that needed a doctor but the sick and that He had not come to call on the righteous but upon the sinner.

“Boyd is not advocating letting anyone out of jail, he is merely offering to fix them so when they do leave -as most of them will be released at some point no matter what- that when they do leave they have healthy brains not the sick ones that made them behave without thought for their fellow man. That is what made them bad in the first place I think, they never thought of their fellow man. Are we too not to think of our fellow man? How do we -we good folk- how do we remain good without thinking of our fellow man?

“Science has shown that genes contribute from fifty to eighty percent toward criminality, that is the science and I believe it to be true. But I leave the science to scientists like Boyd and his team at PraXis. I will speak to what I know, and I know love, I know what it is to have it and what it is to lack it. I know what it is to feel love within and from without. And when I met Boyd in high school he never once made me feel anything but genuine love; fraternal love. The love a man has for his fellow man.

“He spoke to me -and to all of us that day- and he told us that we could go out into the world to do good or do wicked, but that if we felt like doing good we should get up early and stay out late to do good but that if we felt unable to do good because we felt resentful and angry and hopeless and like the world was against us, well then to come -that we should come- and look him up, and that he would love us, that he would look out for us, that he would make sure we had at least one person who advocated for us.

“You, many of you, are unaware of how many children grow up in homes that do not love them.

“There is no overt abuse or neglect, that is the stuff that makes headlines, the sugar rush of the easy-to-recognize malady. But, much more common, and more pernicious is the growing up while feeling unloved. Maybe your parents never knew how, or maybe -and this is what I felt for a long time- maybe that child is unlovable in some way.

“Maybe the mother and child did not bond due to problems with oxytocin production or maybe a problem of serotonin in the mother’s brain. These things will be figured out eventually, I believe. However, until they are, I just want you to know that you likely know a child who is unloved, and doesn’t know how to tell you, is afraid or embarrassed or inarticulate. But, love is essential, as essential *and* ,” she paused as she knew she had said the wrong word, and felt

almost unable to correct it as if the sentence was a railroad track and each word a spike holding down a tie, but she corrected the word and tried to keep moving along, “as essential as food and shelter and if you knew a child without food or shelter you would help them. But what can you do for the child who just feels they are unlovable?”

“Well, I went to him after I matriculated at UC metro, because I had a science class that was hard, too hard for me, because as well as I did in school, they had not prepared us for university level organic-chemistry and I thought maybe he would help me figure it out. To be honest when I walked into PraXis’ building on Cherokee street I didn’t expect to even see Boyd, or Mr. Sou as I knew him then. I expected one of his employees to take my name and number and pass me along to someone who at best would get the name of a tutor or something like that.

“But, when I said who I was, the receptionist called Boyd right then and he came out into the lobby and shook my hand and told me he remembered me. He remembered me. Me. He was a billionaire, a genius, a famous and beautiful man and I was nobody, I was nobody in this world. And he remembered me. And my heart broke in half and half again and half again, and the tears fell from my face and I felt so badly because all I could think was I was getting mascara all over his carpet,” the crowd who had adjusted their ears to her mouth, and their faces to her story, laughed nervously and Boyd’s face had twisted as much as it could without rending it seemed, as tears now streamed down his face.

But Rachel did not cry, she spoke with no change in tone, no quiver or quake, no hint of how much pain had produced such wisdom and the conclusions she had drawn about her man.

“The funny thing is his response, what he said was that he hated that carpet anyway, and that he wanted to tear it up,

and he said that he had in fact just been talking about it and that I had been a big help to him because now he had just the excuse he needed to do what he knew needed to be done. He told me my black tears were just what he needed, and he said it so easily and so breezily that I believed it then, and I almost believe it even now," she said with a small smile and the room smiled a little too.

"I speak to everyone who still has whatever remnant of a heart and soul left after however long in this oftentimes cruel cruel world, a world that makes fun not of the confident but the insecure, who steal not from the rich but the poor, who burden not the strong but the weak, who abandon little girls with no daddy to the wolves and the lions and the snakes of this world, and when that little girl finds her hero they try to make her feel that she has done something wrong.

"Well, I have not done anything wrong, I am a good person, and I love Boyd and he loves me, me and Harrissa and he is nice to us, and teaches us all kinds of things that I didn't even know existed, and he encourages us and makes us feel like we can do anything and because of his generosity of spirit I feel bigger than even him some days," she paused and look at him as he wiped his eyes and smiled at her.

"And he's pretty big, huh?" she asked and the crowd laughed a bit and with warmth and many had dropped their cameras to their laps as they sat on the floor, or came out from behind them as they rolled on tripods just slightly, and they were somber in a way not known in journalistic circles where the common joke -a joke told as a story oftentimes- the common joke is that a western reporter once walked into an airport in some third-world hell hole and cynically and callously barks at the herd, "anyone here been raped *and speaks English ?*"

Even among that low group of sub-clinical sociopaths, there were few people not choked up. Rachel had scars on her arms, thin and livid, and parallel like tally marks of some time -to denote the time- that she had endured out of the spotlight, off in some past where she was not paid attention to and not loved; marks of some time when nobody would have listened to her for five seconds let alone the five minutes that she had just commandeered today. Even the religious fanatics were rapt and humbled and quiet. Even the HVAC kicked off and the air was still.

“Anyway, I don’t know if any of that makes sense, but from that day on he was my best friend and my advocate and he personally tutored me in bio-chemistry and then in crystallography and genomics and endocrinology and I transferred to medical school six months ago in Johns Hopkin’s pilot program of online education and I never would have even tried it had it not been for Boyd.

“So, I think if you people want him as your Governor you could do a lot worse. He might even fix problems you didn’t know you had; because I didn’t even know I loved science at all until he taught me its poetry and its romance and how it’s probably the thing I was destined to be. Imagine being destined for something and never even knowing it -that something- never knowing it even exists?

“How many kids does this happen to? How many have nobody in their life that shows them what is available, and cares enough to help them find it, understand it and then participate in that thing’s betterment? That is the world we could have if we want it. Do we want it? It’s an open question, but I know who I’m voting for, and I know who he’ll help if he’s elected and it won’t be the people normally helped by politics.

“It will be little girls like me and the little guy who gets kicked around in this world, and well, that’s pretty much all

of us isn't it? Who among us hasn't been kicked around maybe once or twice more than we thought we could take? How many more of those kicks you think you can handle? I'm not sure how more, how *many* more," she corrected, "I could have taken if he hadn't helped me. Anyway, thank you for listening, that was nice of you; even you people from CNN," she said and everyone laughed warmly and patted the CNN guys on the back as they smiled and nodded and didn't seem to take it all that bad as the applause began to roll in from the edges and gather to the center of the room.

Her ears heard it and her words echoed in her mind now too. She felt chagrined and pained and wanted to run away. But she stood there anyway and nodded and blinked and smiled the best she could.

The applause took her by surprise and Harrissa -who had retreated from their brief handhold- came forward and hugged her and smooched her little face as she cried and shook like little people do, close to the ground, each part close to itself, unlike large beasts where the hands are miles from the heart, the feet many leagues beneath the sea.

Boyd clapped and staunched the tears by smiling -the curve of the mouth like dyke, *Maginot* line- but felt like he had never felt such love for anyone in his life. He thought of how she had been such a great student, took to the material so well, and saw things even that he had not. He recalled how she had seen the chiral valence of their proprietary cas-13 molecules and the cAMP-CRP interaction in reverse of known binding that had led them to be able to attach DNA to a site previously impervious to clean welds.

He saw in his mind that day in the lab, he saw her hands as she wrote her observation down before she had the courage to say it. He still had that note and he thought of where it was -right now at their home- and he wanted to speak on her behalf. She spoke simply, never in need of showing off



her erudition, and he wanted to brag for her as was his wont and his way and his instinct.

He wanted to tell the assemblage what he knew of her; he wanted to bray about her talents and genius and how much she had helped him personally not just as a scientist but as a man, but he demurred. He felt that she had already convinced them of her value, just with how brave and decent she was. *To gild that lily would be pointless, damaging even*, he thought. *And I have to learn when to shut up*. But it was hard because she was so much more than just decent, she was brilliant. But, maybe he had that backwards he thought, *she was so much more than brilliant, she was deeply, fundamentally decent*.

*The world had plenty of brilliant people*, he thought, *but how many decent folks?* "That was her actual *métier*," he said to himself lowly, quietly and nodded as they continued to applaud that unspoken thing.

### **III. 2036 e.v.**

The weights seemed heavier today.

And as Jack thought that, he knew that meant only that he was weaker; he knew that the mass of the plates did not change. This angered him and it made him push harder -up and back- with the 45-pound Olympic bar with its 2-inch collars and 270-pounds of additional weight.

215-pounds was what he wanted to weigh, but he was stuck at 190. Jack ate as much as he could, but Blax said it was just an age thing and that even he hadn't been able to crack two-hundred until he was thirty-three years old.

His metabolism was just too high until then, he'd said to Jack. Then Blax had shown Jack where each calorie went; to the CNS, the immune system, to this outpost of the autonomic system along the routes of the circulatory

system, to that part of reproductive system -to churn gametes- and that hull of cellular apoptosis in the cauldron of the testis. He was shown each bacterial colony of the gut; every *mtDNA* like generator; the *cytokines* like battalions, the *interleukins* like teams of just a few men.

He was given a list of each receivable and each payable too. Each thing was analogized and Jack began to see why.

Jack Four sat up and let his arms and chest burn as he watched the black birds circle over the edge of their plateau as the grey clouds held off in the distance and high above them with that flat-bottom-boat look and the feeling of possible rain.

It was summer, and the heat of the afternoon even at elevation was 81-degrees. That was hot for up here, and he felt it in his skin as he sweat; and in his lungs as he breathed. He then stared at the anvil and forge and burn barrel on the *agoge* and thought of his morning. He had arisen at 0400 and hiked out into the forest to watch the moon as it hung high in the sky, never lowering just moving laterally and fading as the sun overtook it as it too rose.

The stars had once been constellation, then alone, then gone.

He then worked on the '33 Ford coupe upon his return; taking apart the clutch and charging its hydraulic lines to see if the gear box would unstick. The car was trapped in third gear, and he had jacked it up to roll under it on the creeper and placed a rolled towel under his neck. Blax had taught him that trick, telling him the necks in their shared genome were vulnerable and that he should support it now so it was not damaged by the time Jack reached Blax's age.

Jack had laughed, knowing that by the time he was Blax's age he would probably have technology to replace every bone in his body and maybe even not have a body,

although, he had decided -when that had come up- that he wouldn't want to be uploaded onto silicon chips or any of that nonsense. He was visceral, *and needed a body*, he had thought and said. So, he had rolled a towel up and supported his neck and wrenched on the car from below.

The clutch plate had some wear he noticed as he took it apart; he labeled each part and bolt count into sections on the starboard side of the car. Blax had taught him how to organize anything as it was disassembled. And he was surprised at how easy it was to forget what went where and in what order; and that the old-man was right more often than not.

Jack loved to tear things down and get in there to look for the cleave or the score, but when it came to putting it back together it was not intuitive to him how things went side-by-side nor end-to-end.

Blax had looked at him and said, *there might be a metaphor in that*, and walked away as Jack wrinkled his brow in annoyance. Jack had watched as Blax threw his hand away from his body -something flung off the hand and into the sand of the compound- as he walked away toward the hoop house. The Jacks had all laughed when this was said, this barb launched and landed, but Jack laughed only in reflection; at the time he was fuckin' pissed off. Each of their faults and tendencies and talents were all known to each other by then. He was known for a strange type of caution -what they called *pessimism* - and then for a demolition and general black cloud energy released all at once.

But they had admitted that he was necessary and that like Blax had said, *so foul a sky clears not but with a storm*.

He was often the storm of one kind or the next. *But, that is where the salt water is turned into potable water, inside the maelstrom of the clouds*, he thought. *Let the other Jacks*

*decide where the rain water ought to be channeled, let them resolve which crops are best suited for the terrain . He -he thought- would poke at the clouds with a stick and rip their guts open and allow the juice to fall indiscriminately from the hording chest of the sky .*

Nobody knew if Jack thought only of the immediate gratification or one hundred steps ahead; to modern man - the middlebrow- only the two or three-stage plot looked smart; the hundred-year plan looked the same as the impulsiveness and chaotic act. Was he merely punching at the sky or was he thinking of layers of soil and rock, the water table, the well drilled, the village it supported later on? He didn't know either as he wrote down each part as it came off the old Ford.

Tribal societies looked violent and unstable compared to liberal democracies until you realized as violent as tribal societies were, as undemocratic and harsh, they never built a machine so complex as to poison the air and the sea. Which type of society was truly unstable? The one that for a hundred-thousand years led to early -and violent- death for 30% of the men in warfare, or the one that was seemingly civilized and pacific for a thousand years until it killed the whole earth? *That is what I mean , Jack thought. It looks unstable from the view of a mere hundred years, but from ten-thousand years the myopic, the visceral, the hot-headed, the war-like and disease-ridden and undemocratic is actually better long-term.*

*Modernity only looked more sane and better because it ignored the catastrophe of technology that would come from centuries of false peace.*

He had taken the rear wheels off three days ago and replaced each wheel-cylinder and ran new brake line as well. He flanged the line and bent it and reused the clips that ran over the sheathing that slicked the bottom of the

hot rod like brushed skin. It was as an aircraft under the chassis, nothing exposed. It ran too close to the road to have its innards vulnerable, and so -during this surgery- he had to take that layer of aluminum membrane off to get to such guts and lungs at all.

He watched his hands work, then he closed his eyes so he could feel the bolt heads and hex-nuts, the inner vision made the mechanical world appear real to his hands.

His hands spoke to his mind *via* knuckles made of thirteen articulate mouths, fingertips with five high-acuity eyes. He did this under the black blanket of his lids. He remembered when Blax had first told him- as they tore down a complete engine to re-hone the cylinder walls- that the crankshaft bolt was reverse thread; *or left-handed thread* , Blax had said, and that was the first time Jack Four had known a bolt to thread backwards. This had augured the mind in reverse too.

Birds crawled back into eggs, the sun rose in the west, the corpse got up from the ground and breathed in un-death.

Blax had explained why and it had made sense.

Jack thought of it sometimes for no reason. But he often took it as reminder to remember that things can be backwards and still be correct. He let his hands move against the clutch bolts and its monolith like structure appeared in his mind *-like Tzilk'in of the Mayans* , he thought- and he followed its path and felt for the union between the clutch fork and the slave cylinder, to see if it was slick and wet with fluid, gritty with sand.

He saw his life backwards now for a moment.

He normally wore black latex gloves while he worked and when they got too soaked with oil or brake fluid or hydro-fluid he changed them. The latex wrinkled and dissolved; his hands sweated inside the humid barrier. He had removed

the glove on the feeling hand. He wore clear glasses after getting copper slag in his eye once while grinding a brake caliper that had a bur from a rock chip driving the crossover on these ill-maintained dirt & rock roads. They laughed as they drove on roads no better than they were in 1933, and they drove it faster in response to the barbarity of the surface. He and Jack One would take it to town and get fuel in their 20L jerry-cans and they'd languidly buy coffee and wiper fluid from the gas station as people stared.

They didn't talk to locals, but they were gazed upon as they looked like odd twins.

They wore their hair differently from each other and made sure to dress in different hues. Jack One in black and grey and Jack Four in desert tan and sierra pants. They wore shoulder rigs under their Carhart long sleeve button ups, and *shemages* around their necks. Jack One had a high and tight flat top and Jack Four wore his ragged and long but pulled up like black flames. Each hair like each picture he had seen of Blax when he was their age. *He tried to stand in the same river twice*, Blax had said once as he passed Jack; hearing that voice with just his legs sticking out from under the whip. Pausing the hands. Cranking the mind.

The hair and the boy-becoming-a-man had more of an old hydrocarbon flaring look rather than shocked -electrified-mien; there were tongues of fire that rose in his speech and his locks and his ideas; elemental in origin not the modern technology of current that could be conjured and re-bottled with the flip of a mercury switch. They still shaved, and so they had stubble, and you could see their faces. Not like Blax who had hair that was long from his chin and shaped in a delta like a black & grey -Damascus- blade.

As Jack Four set piles of bolts from the old coupe into heaps above his head he thought of the calipers on the crossover and how they were massive; bigger than a one-ton diesel

truck. And when he had removed them to de-bur it he had reckoned with their heft and marveled at the engineering of those bastards of *Bavaria* , the engineers over the ocean. The M-series were still made in Europe and he loved dissecting that machine. It was over-built like a home with 3-foot walls, windows as thick as Infinite Jest and guard dogs the size of the two white rhinos in the *Ol Pejeta*; and they were as mean as white sharks off the *Nā Pali* coast of *Kauai* .

But that slag that had come off had made it so he couldn't close his goddamn eyes for a full night, each time he'd get drowsy the pain of closing the lid would waken him and he got no sleep at all. They were slim shards in the white of the eye and sticking out just long enough to catch the lid as it closed. There were three of each; thinner than lash copper filament; brittle in themselves but intransigent in the lens, cornea and iris. After 36-hours they decided to do surgery on the eye.

Blax had pulled Jack's head back like *Isaac's* under *Abraham* and had Jack One hold the light directly above.

His pupils dilated like singularities and they teared up at the edge. They reflected the prism from the bulb over-head like rainbow dew down in the grass of the morn. Jack was forced to swallow his own spit as Blax used forceps to hold the eye open while he worked at removing the copper slag like weeds by the root.

He used a saline rinse before he began to dig and told Jack Four to grab onto his own leg -Blax's leg- and squeeze it as the pain came on. It would help with the natural circuit of pain, he had said. *As it is like electricity that way*, Blax said as he scraped the sclera of Jack's eye. Plus, then Blax could gauge how much it hurt by how hard Jack strangled his hamstring, he'd be -Blax said with the boy's head back and light above- he'd be in pain right alongside him he had said, Jack recalled.

Jack made another pile of bolts to his eleven o'clock, the threaded rods over him like a crown; he felt his hand grip the next bolt with the same haptic mania, dedication, intention like his hand that day on the Lt's leg. *Blax often placed himself in between pain and his boys; joining them at least, if he couldn't alleviate it*, Jack thought as he tried to amend his incessant blaming of the man, adding nuance - caveat- because he -now- felt guilty for always assuming the worst. Blax's pant leg had bunched up in his hand in the memory; the eye had felt like it was being cut as Blax dug the sharp but fragile slag out one at a time. It went in the soft eye easily, but to remove it was difficult due to it breaking apart as it was grabbed.

*And man that eye was sore after that*, Jack thought. Blax had dug in the eye whites like eggs with a steak knife. Once he got the metal out he showed Jack each sliver; he released the forceps and allowed Jack to blink once again.

He remembered his eye watered and blurred.

They worked ten-hour days, with a one-hour lunch and then they each read for two hours and exercised for one.

That gave them eight hours sleep, and two hours to try something new. Jack Four had wanted to learn to bend trees after it rained, so he built a contraption of rope and a come-along and waited for the deluge to come. It was three weeks after he had built it before the trees were wet enough to try. But when he had traipsed into the forest with his rope and winch -with the water still coming down- the other Jacks had asked if he needed help.

But he was unsure about any of this, so he declined their offers and set out for the north slope. It was an instinct that had no point that he could see; it felt like no more than a lark.



The trees had green moss on the north side of the bark and were black from rain and from damp. He found six trees that seemed aligned and would fold like fingers from two hands in a crosshatch once he was through; so he began by climbing the first one and attaching the noose he had made. He climbed down and attached the other end to the one tree fifteen-feet apart at the trunk and cinched it down with the make-shift come-along he had built from an old winch from an ATV they had traded with a local civilian who lived off Wet Canyon road; a trade for fixing a plow he -the old man- had had.

The next series of trees he did the same and the last two he pulled closer and found that they had more flex than he imagined at first. So he went back and pulled the first four together that closely as well. He tied it off with a slip knot before removing the winch.

This took him two hours and as he stood under them on the slightly uneven ground, he looked up and noticed the archway, cathedral like, and like prayer hands above he was stationed in the avatar of palms.

He looked fore and aft to see if he could enlist more trees to build a longer hall, but he was out of rope anyway, and so he decided to head back home. He wondered if the trees would snap once they dried out, but he figured he'd find out later and in a forest of one-billion trees six of them were not the be-all end-all of anything.

But as soon as he had thought that he winced a bit. Like a shiver, blinking, heart racing all-at-once.

He could imagine that was what God said when he flipped a coin on whether the Jacks would survive their next escapade or not. He saw fate as more and more aligned with some god or some demon who walked into the arboreal expanse of the cosmos and pulled three galaxies together in a black crash, six suns in a blue and red warp, twelve planets in a

line that was in a known-gold ratio apart. And he shuddered, he feared it, he felt his body was no protection for his soul from these gears of the gods.

He wondered if the other Jacks felt that way, if they ever felt guilty or like they were inviting trouble by being rational or too insouciant about the innate amount of natural resources of the world and how this made each individual element less valuable *en toto* . He could feel bad about killing a spider for this reason sometimes, even though he knew it was foolish. It was not even a moral issue, it was more solipsistic than that.

He worried that his rationale would be used against himself in due course. God would say, '*well, look, Jackie boy, remember when you were like, hey, what's six trees among a billion?*' and Jack would have to admit he did in fact remember such a thing. and then God would say '*well, what's one Jack among six billion people?* How would he act? Would he offer God three Jacks in his stead? *Would I bargain away such things?*' he asked himself.

He didn't even know if he believed in God, he knew he felt like he did, but, there was so much to argue against it as well. It felt like a stalemate was the most reasonable thing to conclude. But, that felt cowardly and dumb; it felt like a man ought to decide. So, for now he decided to believe in Him, and be open to evidence to the contrary. *That was a respectable position to take* , he thought. "For us both," he said as he turned his back on the *Aspens* laced like fingers, from the forest floor like palms riven with crease-lines and vascular blues under the surface and bones buried below that.

*And Blax had agreed , when Jack had brought it up at dinner, Jack Two that is ,* Jack Four now recalled.

They had been reading aloud -taking turns- from *Montaigne*; each Jack reading and passing the book, chewing and

drinking and nodding at dishes as silent request of desire. Jack Two -as the clanking of the fat bottomed *Burgundy* magnums against the concrete slab of the dinner table and the black cutlery absorbing the Edison light of the old yellow bulbs, and the Starfighter Lilies wafting smells in intervals that made the brown rice and bear meat and blueberries change flavors in the mouth as one chewed and breathed and blinked the eyes as the music lay on them like a blanket- as Jack Two had mentioned the idea of which Jack Four now thought.

And Blax had said it was indeed a respectable position to take. Jack Four had remembered adding, “for the both of us,” back then as they all smiled slightly at his somewhat inaccurate mathematics; and his wholly odd fucking ways.

## 20. Arise<sup>3</sup>

Poetry came before prose

The Master and the Emissary [McGilchrist, Iain]

You ever hear the one about Prozac in the 19<sup>th</sup> century? No? Ok, so Nietzsche is on Prozac and he says, *oh, the priest he ain't so bad*; and Marx is on it and he's like, *meh, Capitalism is, well, it ain't that big a deal*, and Edgar Allen Poe is on it and he says, *Oh, hello birdie*. Oh, that kills me, man [laughter]. Oh, dear Prozac Ahab, what say you? *White Whale, white schmale*, old thunder said. [laughter]

The Interviews XXCI Vol 4 [Inmate 16180339]

Your conscience is a trick, it don't exist though you may think it does, and if you think it does, you had best get it out in the open and hunt it down and kill it because it's no more than your face in the mirror is or your shadow behind you

Wiseblood [O'Connor, Flannery]

## I. 2039 e.v.

The sound came first.

The landing gear whined and thunked and he awoke from the base of the neck to the frontal lobes. He had dreamed of his boy in the gulf two decades ago, and yet it had felt like right now. When he awoke it was like when he had blinked watching the PWC and the sun of *Dubai* off the bay.

"Water," he said and thought of three things: the past, the now and the future. He drank from his canteen. His ribs rattled and his hands buzzed.

The towns along the Mississippi had been flooded and the coasts had taken rain for fifteen days straight. National Guard troops had stationed most of their materiel in Kansas or the eastern plains of Colorado to avoid the watery ground. He was asleep as they passed over it; his body's waters pulled down slightly as they did.

He'd fallen asleep three times on the flight and dreamt of his boy and of *Chile* and of the black clouds of *Kandahar* over the brown mountains and men dressed in layers of fabric like folds in curtains he could never pull back. The

Afghans had confused him for so much of his first tour, and now their movements made so much sense to him that he saw primary colors and Euclidian geometrics, not men. The shadows on the ground rose up in the dream, the metal of the chopper sank down.

Wells had been on the ground at Fort Carson's airstrip for 108 seconds. He had come from *Ramstein* by DC14 -and *Stuttgart* by HMMVW before that- and before that a civilian plane out of DXB in *Dubai* . He was now at the 4<sup>th</sup> battalion 11<sup>th</sup> special forces group along the front range of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Charlie company/0438 would be his attach; and the great-grandson of Larry Thorne -the Finnish Army soldier recruited for SFG in the fifties- would be his *attaché* . Wells held his orders in his hand and folded them back into his vest; the details ran on his coder -as all the coders seemed to do- like words from an abjuring mother long ago: with authority and a certain anxiety too. And at times it was auditory, one heard the coder explain what one was to do.

The inner voices of self receded; the coder's voice overtook. And the body thus moved.

The 10<sup>th</sup> group -the predecessor to this 11<sup>th</sup> - had saved 500,000 Kurdish lives in the mountains of the Turkish-Iraq border and Larry Thorne III -Thorn IV's father- had been the last member of that operation in command of the unit.

On September 2<sup>nd</sup> , 1994 the 10<sup>th</sup> SFGa had transfer to Colorado, and 53-weeks later command headquartered there also. Wells was part of the CIA's Special Activities Division -a unit in Iraq weeks before the official invasion in 2004- and he was now -upon landing at the base- attached to the 11<sup>th</sup> . His coder downloaded the history of the unit from the Lodge Act to now. The Mannerheim Cross glowed in his mind -thanks to the coder- as he walked the tarmac. The

insignia and command structure on base populated his mind like memories of things he'd always known.

He walked and more and more info uploaded from the cloud to his PGC.

His limp seemed to come from his ruck and he ignored the enlisted men as they passed him to meet the rest of the DC10's manifest. He wore aviators and a red beard and the look of a southern man back from the Sumerian desert for two decades and one year. He was 66-years old and second oldest man the CIA had overseas; and now he was the oldest at the base. He side-eyed equipment and men as he walked; he let the information flow like sounds or smells.

The DEVGRU units slept during the day and trained at night; and as he saw their black upgraded HMMVWs -parked by Blackhawks staged in a ring- their classified schedule populated his mind. He had top clearance for everything now within the Special Operations units here in Colorado. Each piece of equipment he looked at loaded a brief file on it; detailed records on the men who used it; deep documents on the history of each unit patch. Names were redacted, mission details all officially scrubbed -once he'd seen it- but everything loaded on his coder like one would recall old pets, old friends, easily remembered body parts, how things went up and back down on sea and in the air.

Everything had a name and place; each thing had a use.

He saw the spade of MARSOC on one HMMWV backed into the *hanger*7 and his mind showed no data at all.

Even the unit size -normally around 4,000 personnel- was occluded. "*Always faithful, always forward,*" came up for a moment and then his coder went black. A black 'marine raider' flag, five asymmetrical stars around a red diamond skull populated his field of vision and snapped back out and

then disappeared. He kept walking and then looked up a few degrees to the sky.

He knew to look at the control tower as they signaled him to head to the *hanger18* . Semaphore and Morse were used as the audio *comms* had been broken for a week. His coder worked, but not much else did and the base had reverted to analog, integer, and semaphore.

He'd been called back to do *geek shit* , he'd say with a grin when airmen asked how long he was rotating in for; but despite his flip answer he was nervous about why they'd pull him from the sandbox, *to fix shit anyone state-side could fix* .

As he walked toward the hanger doors he caught the gait of a man in BDU's rolled in a rough cuff to the knee and black socks just below; grey shirt and a one-strap molle-bag slung so that the right shoulder was free. His boots were squared off and his beard had begun to grow; his hat was pulled low over the eyes. Wells had nothing populate even as he saw the man; no file or biometrics came up; and then Wells - distracted from this anomaly- saw his old CO wave at him from -and like a hole in- the rectangle of black of the hanger ahead. So, despite this seeming error of his PGC he let the man pass with no third thought and he let the heat rise under his chin and the sun warm his neck and back with its rays.

Behind the hangers was a Mercedes GLE in black with the stance of a panther and under it the old runway heading was painted in white.

The man passing Wells now approached a refurbished Fairchild C-82A Packet; its silvery fuselage had been painted over in dark olive drab that absorbed all but lush -high-nitrogen- green light like sponge soaked up moisture and metals; its wheels and props were black; its pilots wore dark helmets and visors and the airframe's schematics populated



his coder now. Each rivet was black too and it made the plane look like a grid; and he saw circles spiral with common degree turns and he blinked to clear his eyes of these trails.

The plane had two redesigned engines based upon the R-4360 Wasp Major painted in grey and banded yellow at the heads. The exhaust manifolds were a matte ceramic black and it had forty-eight pistons like insects in forty-eight cylinders like cells. Fluids and dry weight details loaded on his coder; BHP and torque ran to two decimals; and the vibration from the props swirled dust up and around his stride like cavitations to a wasp lifting and hovering in place.

He clambered into the side door all at once.

As he boarded the plane Jack Four recalled the hours spent in the clean hangers south of this AFB. As he walked the fuselage he remembered the way his palms and fingertips felt as he inserted each of the 8,600-horsepower super-charged engines; he recalled rolling them into place like a trunk lid hinged at one end, radial at the hands; using the cherry-picker holding all but 59-pounds of the weight which he had to muscle about. He had worked overnight at the Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona and snuck in and out with the *bots* swarming him like fleas. Jack had taken Isaiah's engines -MO had transferred them from the lab for him- and R&R'd the originals over a long weekend before having the *bots* tug the C-82 out of the building to East Valencia road and taxi it to Davis-Monthan AFB.

The plane was notorious for being unable to run on one engine.

This was why it had been abandoned by the Air Force by the mid-1950s. Designed as a glider the two-boom plane had engines added later like an evolution of heart or lung to an organism of no central nervous system for years. CQ-161 was painted on the aluminum below the cockpit in black. 44-23006 was stamped onto the billet aluminum name

plate. Rivets ran like stitches in a monster darned and a man revived.

*I loved every moment of working on this plane,* he thought as he looked aft for a seat.

His back was sore and he felt each step; the floor's metal felt like walking on the surface of his home. As he nodded to the crewman walking up to the cabin from the tail, he unslung his pack and set it on the bench seating opposite of where he sat down. He recalled that he needed to remind the crew to change course once they were over the Pacific. The door -as Jack laid down on the bench and pulled his shemagh over his eyes- was pulled in by the co-pilot as he then ran down the gangway to the rear to check the clams. They were dressed in AF jumpsuits with their nameplates removed and unit patches pulled and the black Velcro exposed like scars or burns.

He drifted to sleep and thought of the museum.

It had an SR-71 Blackbird that Jack -while waiting for parts to arrive or for his mind to clear- would walk under and reached up to scratch its belly like a big dog's. He had ran his D2-index finger over the outlines of *Sentimental Journey* of the B-29 super fortress under the I-beams of *hanger-A9* . He had -at night- watched shadows off each plane, each prop, each part as they hit the grey painted concrete. He had wiped single drops of red fluid or black-amber drops and used it to grease the bezel on his own chromometer as he looked for where each leak came.

He had taken his time back then.

The desert atmosphere had been even more desiccated than home and he drank water as often as he thought of it. He more often bent down to look at the fat tires; got on tippy-toes to look at markings; he drained fluids from warmed engines as he sifted through papers from the 309<sup>th</sup>

AMARG and saw hand-written notes signed '*the graveyard of planes* .' He read dot-matrix instructions demanding the ground crew hold onto this or that part on a bill-of-lading copied or upon sometimes received. He loved the sheet metal and color of pewter; he thought the military aesthetic was 96% correct and merely wanted to improve it by four.

The *empennage* of the C-82 craft was 4.3 meters off the ground allowing trucks to drive-load into the clam-shell doors from the rear.

In 1954 the Packets had all been sold off to privateers or cut up; this one at the museum in Arizona was one of one still operational in the world.

His coder read of this model of cargo-plane that was grounded after the crash over Big Bear Lake, California.

*Captain Charles M. Eckstein stayed at the controls as the other eight men bailed out. 135-3110182 on [redacted].*

*His US label pins were recovered at the site later. He was 33-years-old at TOD . [end report]*

His back relaxed and flattened on the modified benches - that he had fabricated and welded months ago- as his coder ran its hypnogogic protocol. His lips moved in phonemes as his brain already dreamed of a hole in a concrete slab with forty-six words stamped in deep relief above:

*And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered; for to devour her child as soon as it was born - Revelation 12:4 KJV*

## **II. 2017 e.v.**

"See, I just want you to put it into your own words, one or two sentences, it will be artless language, and I will not hold

that against you. I just want to see if you get the point," he said with a bit of a bite; that meanness disguised; contraband vex smuggled in the hold of a ship with no flag.

"Well, I'd say you were suggesting that your neck pain is fairly bad these days," the old man said in his laconic manner; a Texas drawl from a man born and raised in Arkansas left the air quiet but not undisturbed. His son worried him and he tried to remember when things had changed. He thought it might have come along side the boy's growth in size; and not all-at-once like it seemed.

"Yeah, did you get the feeling -and be honest here- did you get the feeling that I might be talking about more than that? More than physical pain?" Lyndon asked again with this tone of superiority.

"No," Lee MacLeod said with a curtness, a one-word reconnaissance with a thousand-man army hiding in the tree line of his psyche. He thought battalions, manifold cavalry, munitions and materiel enough to outfit thousands of soldiers stretched out along a ridge as long as the Rockies they drove within now. He thought -and hid- a million martial things for each sentinel of speech he sent out.

"I see," Lyndon said.

He knew his father was lying, as usual, by covering all that he knew -and all that he felt- in the camouflage of silence and terse reply. His old man felt that being taciturn was noble, to lie by omission somehow tantamount to the good. Lee felt no guilt for protecting himself in this wicked world; his son himself turned evil.

"Well, I can only be honest, I can only say what I heard," Lee said as if that was not an indication -an admission- that he was committed to this lie. He betrayed no evidence that he was committed in body and soul to ignoring any sounds or

reflections of light -or messages from God himself- that might suggest that his son's pain was deep, and old and the result of some wound the old man himself had first given him. Lee MacLeod did not take responsibility for his son, and he never had, and he never would. And this fact quite literally prevented him from hearing anything to the contrary.

The boy -Lyndon- only made sounds of the drone, the bee or ant with no father, the one of many built for one thing: war or work.

Lee was deaf to the world of any complaints. Lee had always been responsible for himself; abandoned as he was by his own kin. And thus he would assume his child too was responsible for himself. It was the philosophy of modernity, and America: nobody owed anyone one goddamn thing.

"You are former law-enforcement, yes?" Lyndon asked rhetorically, his father's time in OSI was not up for debate or some mere background phenomenon. It was known. Lyndon wasn't going to let this go. And he'd use anything and everything to make his point. He pried metal bumper from junkyard car; picked up metal stock from the ground.

As Lee nodded -but didn't answer- Lyndon proceeded, "well, did everyone you ever arrest, did they just come right out and tell you that they did it? You know, did they say, *gee Special Agent MacLeod, I sure did conspire to transport ten kilos of heroin -a schedule one narcotic- and you know, thus contravening about four hundred national and international laws?* Hmmm? Did they say that to you each time?"

Lyndon then smiled as they drove the tan roads outside his land, black cattle and gravel moved as he drove by. He smirked as the old man smirked and then the old man said that *no*, they -his suspects- did not perform an allocution in such a manner each time. They indeed denied it as long as they could.

“Well, fuck, how did you ever know that these guys were guilty, I mean if they didn’t come right and *fuckin’* say it? Or maybe -and this is me just *spit-ballin’* here- maybe you think you can read between the lines, and read people and tell that they did something or that they think something that they ain’t exactly *comin’* out and *sayin’*, right? But, I get it; you don’t think the rest of us have this special ability that you have right? Is that it?” Lyndon said and side-eyed the old man and in background -outside the truck- he caught dilapidated buildings -old hay shacks and one-room cabins- that populated the side of this unmaintained country road. The road itself crunched and made dust as he sped up.

“No, I never,” Lee spoke in bursts and was getting angrier by the minute but he was interrupted in between each series of words.

“Oh, so maybe I can tell -I too, can tell- when someone thinks something and yet they do not say it; maybe I can tell when you -for example- feel hatred for me but don’t come right out and say it. Maybe I have a perspicacity, you know, a kind of wisdom and sixth fucking sense that my own father hates me and is *fuckin’* with me over and over to get even for some grudge he’s held for forty *fuckin’* years,” Lyndon barked and was increasing his volume and speed in tandem -and thus crescendo- as his foot depressed the accelerator into the road’s curves.

“I do not hate my son,” Lee said and then -correcting his syntax- added, “I do not hate you.”

“Well, I think *ya* do. Because *ya* act like it. You don’t say it, but *ya* act like it,” his words dropped enunciation, and the redneck in him began to unfurl with each clipped and jammed together word. “And so, I’ve put up with your *beatin’* my ass when I was weak and small, your tyranny, your lack of encouragement, your lack of joy at my successes, your lack of loyalty to me, your lack of emotion

around me, this flat affect that you think is so cool. I've put up with your failure to stand up for me, and even your direct meddling in my affairs that redounded to my detriment. But, I won't pretend you love me anymore. I will not. And so, part of that is that I will not allow you to lie to me, and let you get away with *sayin'* you're being honest, when you are clearly hiding ninety-percent of what you feel.

"Having said that, I actually agree that you might *think* you are *bein'* honest. I've read up on the way the brain works and it's true that when a man is biased, politically biased - for example- he cannot remember facts that contradict his positions; even if they -even if the people conducting the study- even if they incentivize him to recall the facts with the offer of cash payments for each recalled fact.

"It's a medical fact -it seems- that if you're committed to your beliefs you will not hear, not see, not remember anything that contradicts it, even, especially, if you hear the truth. The truth is an impediment to your belief-system, and so the truth shall not be heard. Not today, not ever," Lyndon said with an authority as if he was objective and outside the system, unattached to the universe that he described.

"Well," the father was already confused; the way his son spoke -the twists and turns of sentences like these dirt roads- used double negatives and triple *entendres* and four ways from Sunday to say one thing. He watched the rocks above the road and braced himself as the truck slid its ass out of each switchback and blind curve.

"Look, old man. I realize you are incapable of seeing it my way. I get it. And so, I will leave you with this. I don't mind that you don't see it. God ignored *Job* too. And I am not half the man *Job* was. But, I do mind that God made us sick and then commands us to be well.

"You let women raise me; *women*, for crying out loud," Lyndon said as if he'd saving this up in a piggy-bank he'd

just broken open.

“You let a boy -a male child- be raised by women; first by your wife -my craven mother- and then by a succession of female school teachers, each more overtly liberal and surreptitiously tyrannical than the next. And you allowed this to occur inside an effeminate and faggy culture that is itself arbitrary and tyrannical, Ok? Which is not unlike you yourself, which is maybe why you get along so well inside modern America. Lenient and *effete* when you ought be manly and strong, and yet also arbitrarily tyrannical and unjust -obsession with bureaucratic rules- when you ought be wise and edifying. Fuck America, that is each man, woman and the country itself now. Fat-skinny: fat where it should be thin, thin where some bulk might do.

“At any rate, that upbringing, that weakened me, made me soft and whiny, and that is what you’ve all done to an entire generation of boys, ten generations for *Christsake* . I can see the ships from England and them stripping us of our claymores and our clan kings and our ways. I can *fuckin’* see it,” he said this and he did indeed see *Scots* on the shores of New England then Carolina and the way they had been separated and scrubbed and called *wogs* and bloody *jocks* and *sweaty’s* , all the while calling Scotland the land of *welfare dwarfs* and *barbarians at the wall* and England’s *unemployable neighbors* . The *Scots* were seen -by the English- as low, crass, beastly and not in control of their emotions.

Perceived as uncouth -the way all white men saw black men- the *Scots* were the first *niggers* in America.

And this didn’t change as the north of the colonies became England and the south Scotland; this didn’t change as the southern United States were lampooned by the north as *rednecks* and *hillbillies* and *gravid scum* .



“And that’s fine if you so-called fathers, this ostensible country, if you all want to let women raise your sons for you while you make money -*money, the most important thing to the modern man* - well, that’s fine. If that is your priority, to make money for this banal, middle class life, while abandoning your sons to women to raise, then so be it. But it’s not enough for you to abandon your boys, no, now when they -when these sons- when they turn out damaged, and weak and whiny then you lazy fuckers have the temerity to be aggrieved!” he said and shook his head as the truck took each turn more recklessly, the oncoming lane taken, the blind curve ignored, the sliding of no concern.

Muscles tightened to brace, organs sloshed in place. The eyes narrowed and the brain tried to compensate.

“And even worse, when a man, when one of these hobbled and crippled sons decides -all on his own- to shed that weakness, to slough off that corrupting influence of women that was placed upon him -a drowning man thrown a brick- when a man -despite all that gay bullshit he was raised in- pulls himself up by the lapels and says, *no, I will not allow my rearing by women and weakness to ruin me, to emasculate me, I will forge and form myself, from myself, I will use alchemy from the gods to fashion myself into a man, to build myself into something strong and useful and helpful to myself and those around me*, when I do that, when we do that, you -the great fathers of the world- you get even angrier, you lament it with even more pique, you bitch and moan even more,” he rose his voice and carried nothing for punctuation or word count or the endless caveats and addendums made within sentences inside sentences like nesting dolls. He used the steering wheel as hammer and the road as anvil and barked at his father with his right arm loosely gripped on the helm just in case he need let it fly.

His neck ache had flattened, the anger like Novocain, his stingers at the elbow calmed. His back loosened and with each rise in volume he heard less and less of his own pain.

“Now -according to you and your polite society- now that I’ve sloughed off the need for help, shit, now I am *too* aggressive and *too* violent and *too* strong for your tastes. Now, I speak too honestly, too uncouth now, is that right? Well, you baby-boomer assholes abandoned your sons to the feminine world and yet, you want to complain when your sons are all pussies -like Travis- or reactionary and wild beasts like me? You failed as a father, that *ought be* enough to shame you, but no, you have to continue to deform your own progeny -and your own soul- by complaining that they -that one of your sons- is too rough now. You have to say that I speak too demotically, too impolitely, with too much visceral angst; that I say too many bad words?

“This is tantamount to God making us sick, imprinting us with original sin, condemning us to work and to suffering and to death as outlined in Genesis, and then commanding us to be well! *Commanding us!* ” he said with a roar as the ass-end of the truck flew around like a wound watch reset after it had gained too much time. The old man bit the lip, seethed and sucked his breath, he gripped the door handle and arm rest as he looked straight ahead. Lyndon looked more and more at the old man, the hair receding the lump on the neck, the ears and nose grown large.

The muscles vitiated; the man had shrunk before his eyes.

“You get to choose one, motherfucker. One. You can raise us to be, *make* us weak and sick or you can command us to be well, but you do not get to do both,” Lyndon said as declaration, to fathers *writ large* . His hands had gone white at left, and eager at right.

“You either raise us right, correctly, in the Spartan -*agodic*-fashion; you either raise us to be men, *real men* , or you

shut the fuck up when we turn out the way that we do. You want extreme ownership but then piss your pants when we actually take back control. Bunch of *phoneys* you all are. Stop the whining but give us no authority? Is that it? Well, fuck that. You want us to take responsibility then we take authority too. They go hand in hand.

"I had to make myself into a man; and you have no say in how I live in the world now. Yeah, maybe I ain't as noble or decent a man as I could have been, but I am a *self-made* man, I had to cut some corners, I had to use bubblegum and bailing wire. I had to adapt, overcome, improvise. I wasn't raised to be a man, I had to *become* one, and that means I am going to be a little rougher than the world might like.

"But you better hear me, because you lost your vote on how I act the moment you undermined me as I was out here building a metal and concrete home from scratch with my bare hands and my last remaining money, what was left, a paltry \$100,000 was all that was left of my whole million dollar world after you and your friends conspired, plotted against me, to ruin me. Ok?" he pointed now at the old man and made him a villain when he had merely been incompetent; perceiving conspiracy where stupidity would do; faces in clouds and rock formations; plots seen behind cupped hands that covered all eyes.

"I didn't whine or quit, I built this home from nothing and all I asked was for you to leave me be. Let me exile myself for awhile so I could gather up my strength after these betrayals and figure out what the fuck to do after God took everything from me save my dignity; my pride and this angry body. That is all I had left and I got to work; I didn't curl up and die," he said this and thought of the women - women of all creatures- who had laughed at him as they stole from him, Tess and Alexandra abandoning him as if he

was an old worn out horse, nothing divine at all. He saw the way they used him and felt nothing.

He felt the embarrassment that women were treated like anything other than what they were: pragmatic. He was ashamed at how he revered what was base.

*If he was not divine then a devil he'd be*, he thought. *The world was gonna learn of consequences*, he thought.

"I built that home from raw land with these hands," he barked -his voice cracking just a bit, his eyes watering no more than necessary- as he raised the mangled and chaffed -and unhealed- hands and splayed them like a water dog's. "My anger is analgesic, do you get that? It's the only way to compensate. My rage, our rage as men, is pain-relieving, it is the only way to combat this incessant pain of body and psyche heaped upon us by you fuckers. You ruin a people, reduce them to nothing, constituent parts. Fuck," he had no idea what he was even saying now. He just felt like drilling holes in foreheads and sinking sticks of dynamite in everyone he could round up. He saw firewire along the ground; he saw the world as flat, the universe as round. He saw God scoop him up and pet his head for a thousand years. He saw sleep. He saw calm. Everything he saw was wrong.

A rock hit the undercarriage and it activate his *cerebellum* and his cortisol rose and testosterone too; his pique and pain in the lower back; and he leaned forward toward the windshield and steering wheel.

"So, you better hear this now; and just so we are clear, there are no punishments or rewards in this life, merely consequences as you say.

"So, you are to shut the fuck up; that is now your job, and you better make it your life's work. Or I will punch a hole through your paper-thin soul, old man. I will pull your whole

house down. You hear me you fucking cocksucker?" the son said using the catch phrase of *only consequences* that his father -for close to seventy years- had liked to bandy about to sound tough and rational and smooth. It was now turned back on him, in a way that the father did not like. His hypocrisy was bone deep, he did not even notice the irony; only that he did not like his son at all.

Lee just sat there with that look on his face that the boy - now the man- had seen a thousand times from a hundred elevations and laid out like ten commandments: *that shalt not get along* . The twist of the lips, as if he was wrestling with an idea, an idea just there in the mouth. *But it was no wrestling match, it was all for show* , the boy thought. The vehicle snaked and turned against itself more than the monolithic men. *The old man, he thought, was going to do nothing, say nothing, be nothing ever again. He was a tyrant; he picked only on the weak.*

And this beast -the old man felt but did not think- that sat to his lee side -an animal half his genome- was twice his size and ten times as violent and a hundred times as willing to kill and nine-hundred and ninety-nine times as eager to die.

### **III. 1998 e.v.**

Vong shook him in his berth; it was 0714hrs on October 15<sup>th</sup> , 1998 and he was in Vero Beach, Florida on 118 acres of grapefruit and orange grove; Zendik Farm LLC.

Vong's face was soft and without malice or crease or hint of doom.

Lyndon had dreamt, and he re-lived the parts that appeared in his just-awake mind.

He was involuntarily listening to Vong now wake the others in the room. There were eight other men in his bedroom, in this ranch style house; sixty-four people total. And the day

was beginning as usual, early and with the gentle and friendly waking by the man with black eyes and a genuine heart and almost no ability to think for himself. *But, who did?* Lyndon asked, thus abjuring himself for his condemnation of a good man. *Certainly not myself*, he thought. *Not yet anyway*.

Lyndon stretched in his bunk and breathed the damp Florida air; he smelled the barn as the goat-effluvium wafted in as if this was part of the ritual of awakening; like the rays of the sun were eight minutes away, the smells came in a delay. He liked the feral nature of this place; he liked almost everything about it; he only wished he could carve out a larger place for himself here. His talents with language were not exactly appreciated and so he worked a shovel, wheelbarrows and bailed hay -alfalfa green often- and also learned to hold a goat's teat between his forefinger and thumb and squeeze warm milk into a galvanized steel pail.

The girls wore rubber boots to muck the barn; and their shirts were tied dyed in soft tones -not garish ones- and the word *Zendik* was silkscreened in black or white upon them. He wore shirts tight about him, his neck especially, the sleeves swaddled him too. He wore tight underwear underneath; many of the men abandoned the entire underwear construct. But not him. *There was a looseness to their martial ways here, like Spartans who wore only leggings into battle; Scots with kilts*, he thought. He was nervous. And while it was obvious that pants provided no real armature in battle with Persians or Alexander's Macedonians, Lyndon still felt that he would prefer to cover his legs, cock and ass -even in mere cloth- in work or battle or from the *no-see-ums* of the south Florida swamp.

His hand wound stung as he rolled over.

He had visions of heather-grey girls walking away from him as he bled, and rudely stained the floor. He had no idea that

women would never stick up for him. He was *naïve* and strong in equal proportion. Only the strength would wane. But he felt strong today and what else was there but today?

He rolled over and watched the lithe men spool out of beds in his fore and begin to prepare for the day; this began with a vision of what he would accomplish. He saw needles and string, he saw thread and piping along the edge. He saw what would be cut and laid out for him.

The room's two windows had soft blue in their frames as the east coast sun rose just beyond the A1A and the intercoastal waterway. He had gone net fishing a week ago with Zoe and caught Snook and watched as pelicans swooped down and Porpoise swam and breached in the brackish water all around.

The mud pulled down on his boots. Changing positions was laborious. The nets were weighted with steel slugs.

Zoe was to his 9 o'clock position throwing the net gracefully to his left. Lyndon let the water remain black and warm around his legs without needing to move; gathering up the net to place the slack in his mouth -a third hand of sorts- and used his right and left hands to hold the net across a plane just above the water. As he tossed it using his waist as fulcrum, it splayed out like an eagle-ray above the water, his mouth released it in conjunction with the hands. The universe stopped for a fraction of a frame. The net landed softly, the weights around the perimeter sank it and would trapped a few fish in the center; the balloon created by the submerging net.

All this happened under water and below the black.

He held the line of the net to draw it in, he waited a few seconds and watched the day break over the horizon; he was 24-years-old and felt like his whole life was still in front of him; *not just in front, but before, me*, he thought with a

subtle tweak of the vagaries of the words that meant he was to be made into a man by his life, by what he was to *do* next.

Birds landed on bars, rays shimmered off brown water, seabests half mammal and half marine came and went as his heart beat toward that last billion of beats.

*His past was frenetic, and disjointed*, he thought, a series of odd events with no narrative.

*I'm some kind of orphan* , he thought, *not that my family were bad or anything*. They were just closed up people who never shared any emotions and he often said it was like being raised by robots or HAL9000. But they gave him good genes for IQ and height -that is what mattered in modernity- and zero predispositions to disease according to genomic testing done years later; all of which are largely heritable. *And they fed him adequately -although more protein could have been useful*, he thought- *so he ought not complain* .

He held the net's string. And he would complain.

He was neglected only because these were highly damaged and reticent people who had emerged directly from the post WWII era, when the world had almost cracked and everyone was manic and paranoid in equal proportion. He saw a line cut in half. Equally. *He was lucky to be alive at all* ; he thought, *because his parents and grandparents were lucky to have been alive at all* . He tried to never forget this.

He pulled on the string as it pulled on him as the net sank around the fish and their water. He saw dolphins appear and sink in the intercoastal waterway as the sun made everything orange.

He tried to give his parents the benefit of the doubt; the more he hated them, the more he tried to cut them a break. He hated ungrateful children who whined about bad childhoods; his childhood was not bad; *it was merely odd* ,



he thought. *And there is a difference* , he added. And all he wanted to do was describe that difference, understand it; not lament it. He felt that was fair; of course, his father was a coward and a tyrant and so any analysis was taken as an insult; one did not bring Stalin any news -good or bad- for it was unknown how he would react to any change no matter how slight.

He thought of this and drew in the net-line as the dawn turned amber and cranberry and the waterway went from flat to maniac; from calm to vibrating and pulling at his legs and then core.

Lee MacLeod as forty years old when Lyndon MacLeod was born on January 7<sup>th</sup> , 1974. Lee had just returned from eighteen months in Vietnam as an OSI NCO; working counter-intel and busting GIs who smuggled heroin out of south east Asia. Lee was clean shaven and wore the civilian haircut of the plainclothes special agent of the Office of Special Investigations of the US Air Force; a unit designed by Symington who had created the FBI earlier in the decade.

Now, Lee wore a brown suit, 3-piece, with a hip holster and a government 1911 semi-auto made by Colt. His ties were often bought by his sons as gifts; they didn't know what their father liked, so their mother -his wife- bought ties with 45-degree oblique-angled stripes and wrapped them for Christmas; the boys merely signing their names. Christmas and birthdays were somber, and the more the parents pretended to be joyful the more morose it became.

He gathered in more of the string of the net and felt the current pull its catch and weights down to the ocean. He watched the sun brighten at eye level; the water place pressure on his wading bibs.

As a boy, Lyndon had processed the gloom of celebration as normal, of course, for everything is normal to a child. A child of God has no reference point; and his instincts for survival

dominate over half his modes of behavior. Lyndon was a survivalist with some idealism at his core that his martial sense embayed; he was pugilistic in temperament and this angered everyone around him who were looking for some permanent calm. He was the waves as all stood on the shore.

He tried to get a look at the sand and back out to sea.

Lee was the patriarch of the family and wielded it with a pendulum of rationality and though he attempted to be a better father than his own -his own was absent, his mother a labile woman had married five times- the pendulum swung back to his natural weight of tyranny as it sliced through the air of the household like a scythe in the old Elysium fields.

Lyndon was observant, penitent to this mode of being. His eyes were open and wide.

He watched as his mother cowered and morphed into whatever shape his father demanded; he watched as his older brother, grinning and effeminate and five years ahead avoided trouble almost flawlessly. He watched his own hand drawing trembling lines.

He watched pencil points break under his weight. He watched as his father commanded those two without touching; a magic trick it seemed. And so he thought Lee had the same control over him too. He saw no strings but he tugged at the air cautiously. He thought his behavior was thus commanded by this local god. Short walls seemed sufficient, Shallow lakes seemed deep enough.

He relaxed and felt his instincts would thus be governed by liminal deity of *Tammuz* , by mercurial *Enki* the watery god out and down.

He acted instinctively as he thought his mother and brother did too; and that their pleasing behavior just manifested itself by dint of his father's magnetic command. He was

truly confused as each day brought trouble in the household, trouble at school, trouble in the neighborhood. He merely acted as he felt; *what else was a new creature to do?* he thought. People think a child is born with the law imprinted on the heart and they are not wrong. It's man's law that changes, progresses, not those bones and blood and brains born from the ancient tribe. Lyndon was native as nature intended, a blink as short as two thousand years too late.

As he moved about Zendik Farm he heard *cicadas* in the treeline of Florida, he felt autumn above him as if waiting to lower the boom.

He thought of when he was four and his brother had bought him a lime green comb in the shape of a human foot, a British Queen's Guard embossed on the edge -they lived in England at the time- for his birthday and Lyndon not yet understanding the need to lie to get along in this world had told the truth: *he thought it was too girly a present for his -macho- 4-year-old ass*. He smiled and grimaced all at once in this remembrance.

His mother was aggrieved.

And as his nine-year-old brother -legitimately, now in Lyndon's view- cried in horror at his little brother's rejection of a gift his mother no doubt had picked out herself, his mother sought out her revenge.

The birthday was ruined of course, the mother held a grudge for the next forty-one years; there are some psychologists who will tell you that if you allow your children to behave in ways that make you not like them, you will inevitably get revenge on them. Lyndon didn't think of this until forty-one years later, but it seemed true to him once he pondered it. Now in the intercoastal he was 24, and half way between the act and his epiphany. The fish bumped against the net under the water as he pulled it in. Their

scales compressed as they flexed. Their body temperature rose.

Smart folks can see the future- *and baby, the future*, he thought, *it is murder*.

Lee MacLeod had killed a dozen men in his capacity as an airman and law enforcement, and he had committed one extra judicial murder as well.

But, he had been very disciplined in these uses of violence; he had stayed out of trouble. This was paramount; as he aged he had seen the phenomenon of sunk costs and since he had managed to stay out of trouble this long, he wanted to continue to remain out of the docks. He grew more and more conservative in his aspect, more calculating, more cautious, more deceptive, more secretive as he aged. His savviness grew as his courage waned. He had watched his boy like a storm on the edge of the *Mojave* , like a *djinn* with whispering swirls made of grains and brambles and black feathers picked up from the ancient desert ground.

He hid himself from everyone; especially his youngest son, whom he could tell was going to evolve into a dangerous and angry man; fathers can see their sons in ways mothers cannot; they can see cracked rib cages and heart-rages, and lungs filled with volcanic last breaths.

And for Lee MacLeod to reveal his own past would be too much like countenance, roadmap, sanction. And so the old man demurred.

Lee was not going to give that boy any clue as to what he was. *But the wolf need not be led to the elk; he finds it all on his own* , the boy would one day think as the blackbirds overhead flew without any apparent cause. *Even the water refused to show shadow, even the air carried noise up and away from the ears*.

Once, when in Germany, they lived off base in a German family's old home -the Germans' had built a nicer one ten meters away- it was white and made of block and had a cellar full of lignite coal bricks and no closets; the family used wardrobes for clothes, the bathrooms were all steel and painted in white, and everything was cold and Teutonic and Lyndon was scared of the incessant unknown. They were thrown into chaos every few years by their moving. The military moves you; and Lee MacLeod wore out his welcome as soon as he righted the ship. The all moved just as he had fixed whatever problem the Air Force had with the AFOSI detachment he was given when they arrived.

Lee was like chemotherapy; necessary and then hated and banished once it had done its job.

Lyndon -pulling the last of netting line- remembered that he was -in this reverie- six years old, and -in this remembrance- moved about the house with bravura in the day, and caution at night. The eyes gave him confidence, thinking -wrongly- that there were fewer dangers hidden in the light. The old memories flooded the mind.

The line in his hands now cut circulation off to the fingers.

His father and mother fought in silence often. One day Lee -forty-six years old- grabbed his boy not unkindly by the hand with a 750ml *Affel Schnapps* bottle in his other hand and a German shot glass -curved and ornate- between his fingers by the stem and they walked -warmly manacled liked this- to the porch that looked down over the little village where there were only six American families. It was 1980 of the common era and Lee's heart still had blood inside it; red and hot and intransigent like the boy's.

They sat and Lee poured a shot for himself and drank it down and then as the boy looked up to him -in both temporal-spacio and heliotropic ways- Lee poured the eager boy his own one ounce shot of the sweet liquor.

Lyndon drank it with pride.

The father approved of the recklessness of it all as he continued to pour shots for each of them until the boy had had four or five and became quite drunk and the father -a half bottle in himself- was too inebriated to give any more fucks at all. *He had to keep the whole goddamn ruse up in the air incessantly, Atlas, he was, he thought, and every once in a while even the Greek gods need a break.*

*The earth rolled -wobbled in precession- as Atlas shifted and shrugged.*

*What the man goes through is nobody's business, they don't ask and we don't tell*, Lee thought.

Lyndon felt the net right in front now, the weight on the line like buckets of chum, gallons of water, sea chest filled with crabs and clams. That is the code, and to break it by whining and crying -and approximating complaining by the sin of explaining- was unalterable until -Lyndon thought- he had decided to say any of this shit aloud. To say it clearly was something he never knew one could do; the words churned inside as if the curse of mankind meant one's voice would be taken by the gods if one revealed the secrets that were embossed on the soul in little rituals like the *schnapps* in Germany that day.

However, he later learned, his biggest mistake was not in the telling, it was in expecting of the rest of the world -the women and children and unfeeling men that all operate under the sway and panoptic eye of the Chief- expecting them to give a shit. Lyndon had actually thought these people would want to hear why the Chief was the way he was; but they did not. They just wanted him to make the money and protect the tribe from barbarians when at the gates; and the rest of the time he was to shut the fuck up and stay the fuck out of the way.

*He was allowed no weakness at all* , he thought of his father as he pulled the cone of the net from the water and wondered what kind of Chief he'd be one day. He'd never heard of the shaman, never been shown the secrets of the men of the shadow and dawn, the men who turned to wolves at dusk.

Lyndon often thought in inchoate conceits, half between thoughts and dreams; he saw images of futures with vindication for either he or his enemies; what began as an honest attempt to explain the ways of the tribe ended with an earnest attempt at genocide. *A lesson to the weak people of the world* , he thought: *when a strong man wants to speak of his heart, listen. Even if your selfish and stupid ass doesn't care, listen anyway*, he thought as he found no rationale.

*But modern society -the death-kulture- of course* , he began to think, but nothing really came from this initial critique.

The hands burned and the eyes adjusted to the dawn. The back ached just slightly above the waist. He then thought that unfinished symphonies have consequences too; for the day and the night of the earth is a system, and as *Poincare* pointed out, once you get to 64-moves from the initial condition one must measure each particle in the cosmos in order to predict where the 65<sup>th</sup> move will land us all.

He thought of the chessboard, the Knave and the Rook, the King and the Queen. He paid no attention at all to the squares.

*We are 4.33 billion years in, with trillions and trillions of moves made* , he'd one day think. Prediction is impossible, now man needs to just assume that that butterfly he watches in May will cause a typhoon two years away; landing 1,900 miles from there. And if he's smart he'll have his orders sent from command and be two thousand miles

away in twenty-three months from the day he lays eyes on the wings that seem like no big deal at all.

*He will land at Ramstein Air Force base the same time the manifold beats of that bug make landfall too,* Lyndon thought as he had pulled the net to the chin and the net's water fell away and the Snook flapped and the sun hit their scales like a hammer and tong that made spark and glow of each gill and imbricate brocade of the fish.

*If a man is smart he will assume he will be in the eye of the storm his own jaw flapping creates* , he thought as he thought he'd like to be smart like a watch.

And once you've stood on the beach as a squall comes in off the water, and allowed the lighting to riven the sky -a livid scar down the black tenebrous nimbus foreground with white angry keloids of doom- once you've permitted it to absorbed the railroad spike rain and hammer-hail of summer into head and shoulder and face -bending slightly to watch the beach sand hollow out with each elongated raindrop and white shard, looking north to the giant tortoise kurgan mounds, looking south slowly to the stucco house, listening to that guy in Arizona Bay howl about the need to *learn to swim* - once you've used the pain as scripture from a god you don't yet believe in, used fear to buoy the outer skin, to inflate the lungs and chest, indeed to pull the arms back in rebellion to the tyranny of God's judgement, once you've done that you understand how all storms seek out all men in time.

The butterfly is just the wink of God as he gets ready to hammer your ass to the beach or the mountain or the center of the fucking earth.

From his end he saw the future, a future he would stride into like *Caesar* across the Rubicon. The way enemies crossed the *Khan* only once.



The net was emptying of water at all but the bottom; the fish falling on each other like ideas in a man gone insane.

It was late summer in Florida as Lyndon now lived at the beach house in Fort Pierce. He the lone male, in a house of one dozen nubile, low-necked and bottomless girls, feral and scared and with bellies full of quinoa and leftovers from the meals at the house in Vero. He was away as the house was languid with girls; their paired up in the absence of males. The screens were coated in olive oil and sage which filled the gaps that the *no-see-ums* penetrated unless this viscosity of food-grade defense was applied.

Now in the evening to that day of awakening by the Laotian, he had forgotten the morning -the net hung up, the fish cooked, he assumed- he only recalled being roused by Vong in the dawn at the house in Vero; and here he was now on the dark beach of the Pierce house. The house lights were off by 2100hrs -*per* commands of the Division of Wildlife- in order to allow the 200-pound and 200-year-old mothers to turtles to come ashore and lay their eggs. The sharks -white tips and hammerheads- roamed just off shore like sorties of atavistic planes, helmed by even more ancient aviators; 500-million-year-old piloted machines, perfect gifts from the pre-Cambrian; the grandfather teaching the babe of the Anthropocene.

He stood nearly naked, just his underwear, and dogtags, embossed upon them: *Lyndon Zendik; Anarcho-Warrior; Earth-Squadron* . He only weighed 167-pounds, but he was all young muscle and bone, so that made him look more dangerous and capable than that weight might indicated on soft men. He was large for the group anyway, *as all the men were underweight; the result of hard labor and merely sufficient food* , he thought as he heard an echo. His face was epicene and his heart showed no lines at all.

He had *d é j à vu* like a rationalist does: perfectly and without meaning until far past when it should. God spoke to him and he ignored it, just as men ignored him when he spoke; and yet he didn't make any connection between his own hubris and the haughty pride of all common man.

He thought of what he could.

They ate communal meals, with no junk food or snacks; it was all whole-grains and 4oz of meat, and organic green leafy vegetables. This was 1998 and healthfood stores were still an anomaly in many areas; they ate as the rest of America would eat in twenty years; and they looked like lean predators; *lone wild and strange* as Byron might say, *standing alike exempt from all affection and all contempt*.

He stood on the beach with headphones on. He stood erect as the rain came on.

The girls huddled in the house as the storm moved in on them; the wind rattled the screens, the upper *lanai* patio doors were shut, the girls put on socks as their feet grew cold. Lyndon let the music's controlled anarchy finger his soul, the marionetted chaos of the storm warned him in no uncertain terms; he let his body bounce like taut drumhead between the percussive sounds in his ears and the rhythmic cymbal crashes of the bolts of lightning off the eastern coast.

His allostatic system issued alarms, his adrenaline shot out of vacuoles like long guns engaging a piratical ship; his veins pulsed and his blood accrued more oxygen as his heart raced like sailors from ships into land-assault boats, the blood making skin flush like the marines on the beach itself. O<sup>2</sup> molecules jammed into his vascular system and his forearms looked like banyan trees, his jaw like an Easter Island carving, his eyes wide, his mind-space right behind his eyes, like a driver behind the wheel, like an eye relief

behind a scope, like the *deus ex machina* of all the world's demons and at bottom an old *Grecian* hope.

He breathed deep this wet lowland air. His tongue swam in his mouth like the sharks out there in the shallows. The muscle hunted words with electricity at the tip.

His mind laid eggs like the tortoise, and he knew in that moment -caught between the two chaos of mother earth and father culture- that order would be restored.

He saw a future at elevation far away and above this shoreline; he'd beat a tactical retreat to the mountains; the next phase of the sea-faring man. Like Noah, he'd land his vessel at the top of the mountain. He saw it all unfold as the rain fell on each part of him exposed and unclothed.

*And he'd be the one to beat that alloy into shape*, he thought, he'd kneed and anneal the folded steel, he'd Damascus the knives like tiger stripes, he'd camp in the woods, high up above this demarcation between the nihilism of the sea and the desert of the beach, high up into fecund and seventh-generation tribal zones, where the beasts had the *limbic* technology that these sea-bass and beach-crabs all lacked.

He thought of black bear and clacking racks of elk and mule deer, he locked eyes with birds of prey, monolithically dark, no shades of grey; he stroked the dead hide of ruminants he had killed and emptied their bellies, like lawnmower bags, so full of still green grass; he grew hirsute like the mammals too; he howled at the harvest moon, he tracked wolves and coyotes, he learned the difference in their tracks and their gait, and their numbers. Each animal emerged from these ovum of vision as the storm threatened him and then made good.

His apparitions a *Matryoshka* doll of nested oppressions and rebellions, he saw like mother's see their children, like

fathers see their enemies, he saw deep inside and from above each instantiation of time and space, arbitrary.

*Tyranny* , he thought as the clouds threw drops at his feet.

Now the pink jellies washed ashore; now he saw clear things with no central nervous system, their translucent bodies revealed a four-leaf clover of entrails as their hair-thin tentacles like a skein -a tangle nest of sleep and dreams- lay inert on the sand.

The water pushed them forward and then pulled them back like regret.

He stared at his feet in the crushed rock-grains as these flotsam and jetsam of oldest instantiations of pre-thinking life came close and were far away to either side of him; up and down the blackening coast. He lifted his eyes to the sky and saw clouds as sharp as daggers, he saw *Caesar* closed in on by the Praetorian Guard. He saw the vapors draw back a curtain to reveal a lightning strike a full inch wide on the horizon, the concussive blast came at last, then the sonorous thunder rasp. His face bore the brunt and he felt how soft his skin still was against the old earth and her rough ways.

He knew he'd have to toughen up soon enough.

He let the wind and sand whirl up and around him and just gave it a wince instead of turning away; he allowed the detritus to sit upon him like settlers, like homesteaders, like pioneers of the West. He gave lease to the rain to pierce instead of wash the warm grains away.

*"I'm praying for tidal waves, mom wash it all away ,"* he heard as if his own soul had left a suicide note for his head to read; a twin left alone. Freedom in tragedy is how it rubbed him; how Cain must have felt despite being unable to bear the burden of what he'd done. *How often will jealous beasts wreck their own nest*, he asked, *how deep goes the*

*rejection flail, what makes any of us think that being calm is sufficient for the tumultuous gods?*

*Did not God and his nature design us as we are? Are not the animals mad, are they not manic and despondent, are they not malicious and obsequious, are they not painted black and blue and brambled sharp as tacks and smooth under that? Are not the beasts in charge of all that stands quite still? Do trees break the backs of cat attacks? Or do they absorb above ground what they inflict lower down in the root-zone? In the limestone?*

He thought of the slavery of spring tails, subterranean animals trapped by aphids -like slave traders- at the behest of tendrils of *Ponderosa Pines* . He saw them sixty feet high - he had no idea why- as he felt himself stand on the land he'd one day buy and upon which he'd break ground. He watched as if from aloft, as if the sea storm pulled just his eyes up above the highest clouds, and allowed him to ride an arching sun ray to the west of this place, twenty years ahead and *Zeno's* paradox of half of a half in lightyears of distance of the cosmic inner-clock as it advanced.

The mycelium and fungi of high altitude forests in league with the wind-blown trees -the conifers with no weapons in hand, no faces to read, no motives to impute- killing and enslaving the moving beasts, stealing their nitrogen, slowly, sociopathically, over time, years kept alive *in stasis* , to feed the green boughs we are calmed by, to allow the *Pinons* to grow closer to our God in the sky. And yet we deny our murderous and *macabre* natures, when our hierarchies are older than these psychopathic green-beret trees. Our nervous systems that submit to the great beast among us, that -if born that Great Beast- dominate those below us with magnanimity, refusing to tear out the throat of our brother as long as he is supine, sufficiently penitent to the way of the world; the *tao* of the fist; of man and *Marduk* and YHWY.

The wolf only asks for movement and instinct; for eyes to see the piloerection of his foil; a mind to judge who would win a fight; the opportunity to shake hands with the devil if he be a god and with god if he be the teacher to the student of revenge.

Justice is nature and nature justice in all but the minds of modern men.

But this is because we've forgotten how to make justice with our hands; we make machines that now make their own sacrifices to the gods. *Know your world*, he thought, *this is the first injunction of God; and we've abandoned it in favor of knowing the mind of other men; we watch the whites of each other's eyes in lieu of watching the bear in his lust, the wolf in his trust in the pack, the crow in flight and when he alights from the nest.*

*We read words not the vane in the wind.*

He remained on the beach and felt these menageries of thoughts swarm like starlings in his mind, broken egg whites in a stainless bowl, his hands kneading dough, his children - both unborn and undead, his birthright, his malice, his magnanimity- in each hand, his tribe scattered to the four winds, his magnetisms lost by the polarizing effect of some reversal of fortune. *Why was he liked and unliked both?* he asked. He felt it all wrong, all backwards: *he was liked for the wrong reasons and hated for the worst reason of all.*

He knew as the storm angled into him like a miter saw, as the clouds no longer individual and outlined like God's cubist muscles, but one brute monolith of *Hammurabi's* code, one *stele* of *Greek* marble, with *Hercules's* dozen labors occluded by colonial Muslim smoke and oil and pitch and fire and black blood, the lightning the only source now of individual energy, the whole storm subsumed him, the rain no longer in drops nor shards but pelagic depths of sea raised above the shore like Lazarus, the tears on his

quivering face beat back into the their apertures, the lids unable to use hands to keep these wee drops from the eyes, a cataract, a flood inside his warbling holes now, his hands balled into fists, his hearing ears enveloped in the wails of man, his heart meeting the sonar head of sperm whales, his bones stripped from their places by *isolatoes* , cannibals saving him with harpoons of his ulnar and radial ribs, his lower mandible, his keel and jib, his 3-boned inner ear ran from drums of war, the oenologist-to-be screaming about falling into the sea, the ground was ground up, his feet splayed like a Labrador's, his blood sloshing in the empty spaces, his precessional wobble seen from outer space, his axis replaced; he knew his affect was a fraud, he knew they all liked what he was not.

He now knew that they loathed what he truly was.

They hated what he loved.

He was an unloved god, one of the fifty names of *Marduk* held in the mouths of witches, *sobriquets* untold to offspring of the next generation, lost to history as the new gods made deals with the children of men; haughty now, insolent. He knew he was born to be everything he currently was not; his glib and ingratiating ways, his facile -handsome- face, *his charm and wit*, he thought with contempt, he knew was all bull-fucking-shit. *Ah, but God made us social creatures, exiled the ubiquitous fear, the final sin; but what if there is no tribe?* he asked himself again. *Can one be exiled from an already disbanded tribe?* He mixed the salt tears with the clear water rain, the storm surge reached his fetlocks now, the pink jellies swirled about, his arm hairs matted down; his shorn head was stubbled and his face was too. *Like a newborn* he thought, with the same kind of fist reflex, hanging from his *momma -ape* tit.

But his hands grasped no mother tongue, they were empty on this beach, two years from the turn of the century. His

palms had only the bite of his nails in them. It would be years before his hands shook from epinephrine, starburst scars on the knuckles from nails and teeth he'd punch, from glass and lumber and metal in men's maws; he'd scrape the lunch from their mouths and scream at their gametes, smash their testicles beneath his boots; he'd wipe their seed from the fucking earth; these fucks had no right to be bred, their father's fathers had been the original sin, and the sons of sons would pay the debit.

*God visited the sins of the father upon the son in real life; I don't give one fuck whether it's wrong or right, he'd say as he left alleyways and warehouse floors, tattoo shops with bodies strewn about, blood spatter like night skies, constellations of Poisson distributions of man's last stupid words, why me? they'd ask his face. Why?*

*Why not you?* he'd think aloud under his mask.

*Fear of exile, of being unpopular was no longer rational, as the tribe was no more; he felt. He then thought -then later said- in decades apart; each of these collapsing into one frame under Heaven, on Earth above Hell.*

Each man was now an individual, western culture -once the perfect gift of God to man- had turned on and destroyed God, and tribe, and all connective tissue. *Marduk's* voice could be heard telling each of his -this ancient Mesopotamian god's scattered bones; of which Lyndon was sure he was one- to reassemble themselves at elevation; to reclaim the white skeleton, structure, framework of their forbearers into a new tribe again.

And that there, and only there, would his true nature be revered.

*There, he thought, where his noble mien and regal mane would be respected, where his cowardice and weakness would be beaten from him by his true friends and brothers.*



*Sutured skin and healed bones would be welded stronger at the place of where it was now riven; the key is not to live in safety but with strength; not to live free of pain, but with tolerance for suffering. We've built men backwards, he thought, ill-prepared for the storms that lift two years hence from the beating wings of butterflies still in chrysalis.*

*There it was again, he thought. "Papillion," he said.*

The sound of the wind was pierced by a feminine cry and he reflexively turned to his south and saw Nika in the doorway of their beach house with mouth agape and black hair in a whirl; her hands beckoning; her voice laid upon air and as knocked-down radio-wave by the hewing wind. But her intent was clear; she was insisting that he come inside and out from the gale. *Females are exactly what they are*, he thought as if it only now occurred to him to see the obvious world.

He nodded and turned toward the undulating sea, he felt his feet sink. Each wave was backgrounded into a vapor of grey. He turned and marched like metachronal soldiers toward the house; his past and future beset him like the legs of millipede man. He collated all that he'd seen and brought a germ of the storm inside like a black rock swallowed within his blood and guts.

Nika watched for a while as he moved forward, then she ducked inside and let the screen door slam.

He watched in his mind's eye as the springtime twenty years hence saw caterpillars crawl along the ground in which he set up camp; hundreds in orange and black. He trapped one in a single-malt bottle and watched it crawl no matter how he tipped the glass; to the top it inched along. He thought of the storms that would arise in the years to come from the flight of this very creature -and from his brothers- along the high-country ground. He thought of the 64<sup>th</sup> move from this initial state, he watched the hundred

legs, he watched the undaunted march to the top of this false world by this natural creature. He watched himself set the bottle down and jerk his .45 from its holster and shoot the bottle into a blast of vacuum and absorption of all the escaping light.

*Heat , not light ,* he thought he heard himself -thus correct himself- in twenty years.

He heard the revelatory wind say, *Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea, for the devil come down unto you having great wrath because he knowth that he hath but a short time. And here is the mind that hath wisdom, the seven heads are seven mountains; and there are seven kings, five are fallen, and one is, and one is not yet come.*

In his future memory the bug crawled away -over two shards of thrown glass- as if the insect hadn't even noticed that his prison world had just exploded and thus set him free in the midst of catastrophe.

The caterpillar thought even less of the storms his wings would -like bellows- blow into cleansing existence beyond both coasts of this continentally divided land. He just crawled toward what his instincts whispered into his ear; a siren and an *Odysseus* both. The muses turned to Lyndon and told him to re-holster that side arm; which he did in obeisance. The wind blew up there, but down here his mind closed the vision as it flew away in a corvid black, and the Florida storm blew him back into the house with a burst. The door slammed and the girls whirled around as if he was truly there as he shook the rain and sand from his brow and emerging hair.

*Locust ate the food of agricultural man; cicada fed on the shade-tree roots ,* he thought.

The wind outside had gusted in late from the Caribbean. The night came. The rain too. And it all said -but none heard-

*that all is ground down and blown around; all until the  
magicicades next will arise; arise; arise .*

## 21. Malice of Bears; Murder of Crows

Uncontrolled immigration has all the attribute of invasion

Twitter June 30<sup>th</sup> , 2018 [Taleb, Nassim]

My dear McClellan, if you do not want to use the army, I should like to borrow it  
1862 telegram to General McClellan [Lincoln, Abraham]

Peace to our neighbours. But anathema to the French name. Hatred eternal to France. This is our cry

San Domingo Congress 1804 [*Dessalines, Jean Jacques* ]

### **I. 2017 e.v.**

“But why?”

“Why what?” Chen asked in reply.

“Why pick morality at all; why not just have it be a sharkish world, sharks are an amazing and robust evolutionary design. They are five-hundred million years old in a world of average life span -of species life span- of a mere hundred and fifty-thousand years. Why pick moral thinking, why pick eusociality at all?

“I mean think of it, if initial conditions rule in complex systems, why ever develop morality?” Lyndon asked; he stood in one place in the kitchen, the phone worked in a few places in the home like mines planted which he discovered slowly and methodically. His back had spasmed 144 seconds ago and now he was aggravated. His *hippocampus* shrank by .0001% and his cortisol rose by 1nm. He watched the mountain rise to 13,000 feet; he also saw the ravine before it and the trees like sails tied to masts of bark.

“Because it worked,” Chen rejoined over the phone. It cracked once due to a poor connection and his own voice

came back to him in echo.

“Yes, but why? Why when the costs are so high? Look, you quote Snyder right, the *Bloodlands* guy, and he says -and you say- *the good people died first; those who refused to eat their kids or sell out friends or behave cynically all died first* . Well, if those are the costs in initial conditions, then why is it -why is fraternity- around at all? The initial conditions must have been rough, right? I mean Pinker says 30% of all deaths were violent, that war was rampant, why morality at all? I -before you answer- I have an idea. See morality is precursor to violence, it activates violence, but not cynical or psychopathic violence. See, look, and this is why scientists are always so wrong on this point,” he paused and stretched the neck forward and up off itself.

“They -scientists- are modern males, they don’t have an inner moral code, they have an exogenic moral code: whatever the social norms are -whatever the legal code is- to them, that is tantamount to morality. They are *Pharisees* . And this ruins the experiment,” he said into the phone and felt it was obvious what he meant. The glass of the garage door was filled with the close Spanish Peak and closer *pinion* trees. Crow flew low and cast shadow on the concrete. His neck felt more and more like a winch was tied to his sacrum and elves pulled down on a clevis that was welded to his C5 in order that they reach heaven themselves.

A line in Latin appeared but he didn’t read it with the left hemisphere: *nunc viat in arce polorum* .

The pain ran through the neck into the ear so that a ringing in octaves of birds in caw -babes in distress, women when they lose their minds- rose and fell like a dinner bell way back at the *hacienda* whilst he was out alone in the scything field. The pain sat on his spine like fossiliferous limestone from *Fostereley* beneath a plinth of alabaster bones and a

buried *Robertus Rex Invictus* swaddled in leaden coffin slab and sealing wax of pitch.

His augury of head-pain was in *Dunfermline* , his torque of heartache in *Melrose Abbey* and his gut-wrench open-ended at *St Serf's Chapel* in *Dumbarton* and the *Cardross Parish Church*.

"See, the ancient man -with old genes that code for honor- is inward in his morality; he sees *right & wrong* as based on internal and innate moral values. And when a modern man transgresses these flesh & blood *mores* , then violence is the first response by an ancient man. Why? Well, because he knows -deep down, he knows- that if someone breaks the moral code it's because he -the transgressor- is trying to test the limits, wiggling the bars in attempts to see if he can remove the perimeter to the cell, seeing if he can tug on the waistband of the girl, and turn the knob to the door, go through the wallet to check and see if there is something there to take.

The peaks looked black and white; the trees too. His ethics manichean and stark.

"A small moral infraction, an insult, to test to see how robust the moral system is," he said as he watched the slab -some slab, some monolith on black beach in remembrance, or sea-dream he couldn't say- but he saw the rock bubble and drip with water, and gleam and glint with reflection of the fire on the rivulets that ran down around the embossed letters -letters, code, that weren't really there but were there in the mind at least- letters and water that glowed and then went dark in strange timings like fireflies syncopating eventually when hemmed in. He then thought of the data - from McWhorter- on African Americans:

*Only one family in five of black people live in the inner city and only one in four black families live below the poverty line.*

And this made him see that these blacks, these families that had risen above the stereotype and the legacy and the ragged line between now and then, he realized these would not be the ones to make it. And it was their *separatism* -as McWhorter described it in lament- that would be their race's defining -immunological- trait:

*Separatism -the sense that to be black is to restrict one's full commitment to black-oriented culture and be subject to different rules of argumentation and morality- is so deeply rooted in the black American consciousness that many might find it difficult to imagine that anyone could be culturally black without situating herself within this sovereign universe, which is felt to be nothing less than "black culture" itself.*

He thought of prison and how segregated they immediately were; administration and inmates all agreed to cleave by race. He saw the face of Todd -his Todd- in his mind as he stared at this inner slab -his own counter top of concrete to his six- and he held the phone to the garage door to keep signal; like a boost as it was made of conducting metal.

*Oh, yeah there are no black friends in prison* , Todd -his Todd- had once said in 1991, in Mason, in the car ride home from a closing shift at *La Rosas*; they were running down to Morrow, driving past the Powder Factory. Lyndon had watched other white men released from California and Colorado prisons now fraternizing with ex-cons that were black. And they said -in that frankness that comes from the lack of class, a kind of honesty one must be poor and felonious to exhibit- and he watched his memory of them saying in front of their black friend in these public *tete-à-tetes* that on the inside they wouldn't be able to be friends -with their friend- at all. And this -everyone admitted- was based solely upon race.

*It's acknowledged, understood by the underclasses, the inmates -the convicts- the workers, the poor, and also the rulers and administrators above. Only the middle class relies on the illusion that no extremes exist, no black nor white; nobody bats an eye at separatism except the white liberal who wants to live one way when it's the other , he thought.* He then saw black within black within black not on the slab, the lithe -the wall that had not yet been built- but around it; all around it. He saw that the blacks that would survive this - whatever this doom he felt, whatever it was- those blacks would be the most ruthless and most eager to act on their tribalism and malice and out-group side-eye. He watched his avatars of the future, as gangs of thousands took over cities and police forces were overwhelmed with entire neighborhoods that needed no time -*no time* , he thought- to adjust to the conditions of war.

*The blacks were already tribal, separate, and thus perfectly prepared for war.*

"Of war," he said -interrupting- as Chen was talking to him on the other end. His own thoughts surrounded him. He pushed them onto his pal.

*The inner-city blacks -even if they were only one in four- would have no hesitation, no ambivalence, no delay in their violence and perfidy and war stances.*

He recalled the way those two black guys had stolen \$20,000 from him in *marijuana* ; he saw the way they fabricated fake hundreds, handed them to Steven -*that goddamn liberal dork* , he thought- and ran off without one hesitation; laughing at the *na ï veté* of these whites.

*And they were right to laugh at us , he thought.* He had known better, and yet he had let his ignorant white partner run the deal, and thus run them both into ruin.



“Of course, of course those would be the blacks that would survive,” he said aloud almost past the phone -beyond Chen- as if it was not there, as he thought, *of course, of course this was the evolutionary model that had served them in slavery, the most robust physically, the most cunning, the least wedded to fairness between groups but the most loyal among the in-group* . America had been training the African from *Kenya and Congo , Namibia and Botswana* , since the ships docked in *Bordeaux* had made their way down the ragged coast of western Africa and loaded them like vectors into vessels, vessels that would travel the ocean then burst open onto the shores and sores of the skin of America and infect it with the *phages* that had happened to make their way in the world -as bacteria not yet returned to viruses- on the dark continent’s coasts.

He tried -in his mind- to map the coastline around the Horn and the straights between *Madagascar* .

But instead he thought of the *mélange* of New Orleans, the Wildman, the Big Chief, the way the port city maintained itself over all these years. He wondered why, *why did New Orleans remain as it was as the rest of America moved on ?* The passage from CLR James ran on the lab and thus on the *bots* , and thus behind his eyes like a reflection, like a thought of street signs he’d once seen in the quarter, along *Dupain* . His *memory* and his *now* flickered, he was in two places at once:

*Honest himself, Vincent took it for granted that the rulers of France would act with common decency towards those black men whose service to France he had witnessed. To him it seemed Toussaint was merely pursuing a personal ambition... Vincent did all that a white man could do. To him restoration of slavery was unthinkable. He expected it as little as millions of British people expected the intrigues of Baldwin, Hoare, and*

*Eden with Laval and Mussolini after the denial of arms to Abyssinia and the grandiose promises of fidelity to the League of Nations and the idea of collective security. Many an honest subordinate has in this way been the unwilling instrument of the inevitable treachery up above; the trouble is that when faced with the brutal reality he goes in the end with his own side, and by the very confidence which his integrity created does infinitely more harm than the open enemy.*

Lyndon had no idea if that whole passage was memory or invention, he had no idea who or what it was about. He thought of his own travails again and spoke almost as reflex to Chen. The phone was held at a cant to maintain one bar of signal in his home. An empty wine bottle rolled on the concrete counter slab and made a sound one and a half seconds long.

“As long as society approved of their cowardice then they were cowards, as long as business was good, then they lied or refused to help anyone, as long as they didn’t get hurt or go to jail, then they never once questioned their own behavior, never once felt bad for insulting their own family, their own father or brother, for failing to defend or help out. As long as it was rational, rational baby. *As long as it was rational* , they all said.

“And the man of honor sees this as horrid, disgusting, unmanly; he feels it as pain, as moral *pain* . And yet, in the old days we would smash the transgressor, if he was disrespectful or insulting. Now-a-days we ignore him, or maybe mildly upbraid him, right? We use moral suasion as our rivals demand. We use *neo-cortex* on the executive functions of the *limbic* regions. But, the honorless man, shit, he doesn’t care about moral suasion, he laughs at our atavistic ideas on honor, he falls back on rationality remember? Does the *cerebellum* listen to the *cortical cap* ?

Shit,” he said dismissively as Chen remained silent on the other end. More shadows made the glass glint, the grey concrete seem to open up. Wind blew pine needles of tan and brown, lighter rocks lifted just a bit. Sounds were made by the way the air and the earth did abrade.

“So, if the ancient man says, *hey, you have to stand up for your father or brother, you can’t just think of nickels and dimes*, if he shames the rational male for his failure to stick up for family, the rational male just says, casually, without emotion, *hey, it’s irrational to give dad a job, and the numbers do not work out on paper to invest in a business with you*,” Lyndon said this as if for the first time, as if he had not said it over and over and over; as if he was not another clone of a clone of a clone.

The page from CLR James ran on in his head as Chen replied; it ran on as if from beginning, as if of no beginning nor end:

*The salvers scoured the coasts of Guinea. As they devastated an area they moved westward and then south, decade after decade, past the Niger, down the Congo coast, past Luango and Angola, round the Cape of Good Hope and by 1789 even as far as Mozambique on the eastern side of Africa. [The slavers] set the simple tribesmen fighting against each other with modern weapons over thousands of square miles. The propagandists of the time **claimed** that however cruel was the slave traffic, **the African slave in America was happier than in his own African civilization** [emphasis added].*

*We excel our ancestors only in system and organization: they lied as fluently and as brazenly. It was on a peasantry in many respects superior to the serfs in large areas of Europe, that the slave trade fell. Tribal life was so broken up and million of detribalized Africans were let*

*loose upon each other. The unceasing destruction of crops led to cannibalism, the captive women became concubines and degraded the status of wife. Tribes had to supply slaves or be sold as slaves themselves. Violence and ferocity became necessities for survival, and violence and ferocity survived. The stockades of grinning skulls, the human sacrifices, the selling of their own children as slaves, these horrors were the product of an intolerable pressure on the African peoples, which became fiercer through centuries as the demands of industry increased and methods of coercion were perfected.*

*The slaves were collected in the interior, fastened to one to other in columns, loaded with heavy stones of 40 or 50 pounds in weight and marched the long journey to the sea.*

*On the ships the slaves were packed in the hold one above the other below.*

He was seeing wet streets along *Decatur* and *Magazine* , and horses refused to move along roads overwhelmed.

He knew not if a storm had come or went. The book in his head began now with a letter from *Vincent* about *Toussaint's* traits. *Bonaparte* had read it and fumed at this heroic manner in which the black man, the black general, the black *Jacobin* was described. *Bonaparte* had once said that he would "*not leave a single epaulette on the shoulders of a single nigger in the colony .*" And from this perspective he had to read of the former slave, the man who had said of himself that he, *may have been born a slave but had the soul of a free man*. Of *Toussaint* it was dictated to *Bonaparte* :

*At the head of so many resources is a man the most active and tireless of whom one can possible have any idea; it is the strictest truth to say that he is everywhere*

*and -and all- in the spot where a sound judgement and danger make it essential to be; his great sobriety, the faculty accorded him along of never taking a rest, the advantage he enjoys of being able to start at once with the work in his office after tiresome journeys of replying to a hundred letters a day and tiring out his secretaries, more than that the art of tantalizing and confusing everybody even to deceit: all this makes of him a man so superior to all around him that respect and submission reach the limit of fanaticism in the vast number of heads. He has imposed on his brothers of San Domingo a power without bounds. He is absolute master of the island and nothing can counteract his wishes.*

*Although some distinguished men, very few blacks among them, know what his plans are and view them with great fear.*

That last line had the quality of a reverberation in his head. He did not know why.

But he had read something once of another quality of the General, it now occurred to him. *Toussaint* had printed a Constitution, which in those days was tantamount to making it law. A hand-written draft was a draft, but to print gave it the *imprimatur* of the law. And in July of 1801 -half way between Jefferson's signage of the American Declaration upon the new world and his passage onto the next world- that constitution of *San Domingo* was radical, autocratic, and known to no one save *Toussaint* and his white and *mulattoe* assemblage of men. The secrets the black General kept were so tenebrous that the blacks of the island whispered that *Toussaint* was *djinn* himself who couldn't speak but through the magic of the white man's words.

Chickens had been killed rather than eaten by men half their proper weight and women who couldn't give milk. Cane fields had been left to rot rather than harvest for

themselves under the new regime. And with each word *Toussaint* didn't say the freed slaves said ten of his treachery and demonism and lack compared to his black rival: *Moïse*.

Illiterate and often hobbled in body and mind, the freed slaves migrated from one suspicion to the next; from the white slavers to now the black lord of the sugary island. But *Toussaint* was quiet by nature -introverted- and playing politics with the British, the Spanish and the French. He had charged *Vincent* with taking the constitution to *Bonaparte* and *Vincent* reproached him for its breadth, island autarky lacking sanction of the French government.

"There is no room in it for any official from France," *Toussaint* replied to *Vincent* and of the Constitution, as if he too saw the document and the writing as embodied. The black General was idealistic and noble, that he seem to lose his footing in the prostrate eyes of the weak.

Lyndon thought of the final scene of *Toussaint L'ouverture* and how CLR James had described it:

*Toussaint, usually calm, was violently agitated. He replied that he would see with infinite pleasure some of his comrades rewarded. But when Vincent asked him what he wanted for himself, he replied sharply that he wanted nothing; that he knew his destruction was the ultimate aim, that his children would never enjoy the little that he had amassed, but that he was not yet the victim of his enemies.*

*To this personal outburst he added some reflections which so hurt the conscience of the sensitive Vincent that he would not even write them down. But we can guess what they were. Bitterness at the insults and neglect which he felt were caused by his colour, the impossible position in which he and his people were placed: submission, which would mean restoration of*

*slavery; or defiance, which would mean war and the complete devastation of the island; his isolation, white and black friends against him; all these must have wrung the words out of him who ordinarily never spoke but where he thought it necessary, and then said only what he wanted to say.*

*He turned abruptly from Vincent and evading about a hundred persons who were waiting for him, he sprang on his roan grey horse and rode away so quickly that even his guard was taken by surprise.*

Lyndon thought he saw rooster tails and the plumes of concussives around the hooves of the charger headed back to the Spanish part of the island. He thought he knew what was in that General's mind, the former slave's hammered conscience, and the black man's anvil of heart. But Lyndon also knew what CLR James knew, that unless he wanted to lose like *Vincent* and *Beauvais*, unless he wanted to learn nothing from history, he ought to know "*that in a revolution each must choose his side and stick to it.*"

He thought all this in a mist of thought and reverie and memory, but he knew he ought say something aloud. So he did.

He used words inexactly: using *alpha* when *sigma* was meant; speaking of one *brother* when meaning them all; all of mankind. He looked at his memory of Chen -with the tens of thousands of dead white men stacked up on the shores and inlands of what was now *Haiti* in mind, with the epaulets of the black General spattered in the mere spray of the white blood, but the boots painted like Cherokee with it- he looked up at the reflection of his own face in the black screen of his iPhone, remembering that *Toussaint L'Ouverture* had been killed because the black General was not trusted by his own men -blacks, whites, *sang-m ê l é mulattoes* - nor by his enemies.

He was too smart, too introverted, too wedded to principles of the revolution in France, and yet at home in *San Domingo* , too autocratic -from the Greek: *to rule the self* - and as Lyndon thought of all this compressed into a drawing he had done of the *Black Jacobin* -gazing out over the bay- he - Lyndon- then barked:

“That is what my brother said to me and he felt no guilt at all. In the old days a worm like that, a selfish -solipsistic- evil fuck like that with zero family loyalty and with nothing but rational greed in his heart would have been smashed to death by an outraged -a morally outraged- man. So, answer this, how is that *rational* ,” he leaned on the word -elongating it- and attenuating its putative power all at once, “how is it rational to be so *amoral* that you incur the wrath of the *moral* man who finally stops using the ineffective tool of moral suasion on the morally obtuse and picks up a claw hammer instead and brains that motherfucker to death?”

He wondered of nebulous things: images like dreams of clouds, memories of sounds -lessons of what is bound-appeared inarticulately to him as a brass-rubbing of *Sir James Douglas* with a silver casket worn on a chain around his neck, the heart of the King of Scotland until 1329 inside; a letter from the abbey made mention of *Sir Simon Locard* holding the key. Details of wars against the Moors were scratched into the papers under this last will and testament.

He saw the men press on in these campaigns after campaigns with the red pump of their king of spades upside-down and around the neck. He now rubbed on his own corpus and lamented what nothingness pressed down but nothing about it like the yoke of the Rex’s heart. His pain was of one kind, he sought the other.

But his eyes saw the book. He mind used the eyes to think. His thinking did the talking inside his head as the pain fueled the whole enterprise like lit bitumen and then the



candle wax of regret as brake to slow the immolation of the wick and to cup the light:

*Five-hundred tons of tallow made candles and Dunfermline orange like a nova of the manmade hearth, and inside his mind was a coruscating pain as heavy as the lead coffin of the king, as dark as the 1,500 pounds of molten pitch. And 74" of the King of Scotland - abandoned by reinforcements- lay inside him riven in three parts; a golden cloth over the head as shroud. History above the heart, gravel in the abbey yard over the viscera of a king his relative.*

*In 1330 the heart was taken to fight the Moors in Spain by Sir James Douglas, the ships sailed to Alfonso XI of Castile. Sir William de Keith, Sir Kenneth Moir, Locard, and William de St. Clair were welcomed by the King of Spain. But by the time they fought in Teba the Scots had been abandoned by the international contingent that had committed first in wax and paper of their journey to fight the Blackamoors. Sir James and all but one Scot were killed; Locard and the King of Scotland's heart the only things alive to return to the isle and Roxburghshire.*

These histories of his people faded and the book accounting of the 1791 slave rebellion lay on the counter cluttered with wine bottles in dark and clear; coffee -whole bean and ground- and black spoons and forks strewn about. The pages yellow had soaked up blossom liquids and viscous sauces -red pistil stain from lilies- and the words had bled. Two sections had been highlighted years ago and read:

*L'Ouverture had defiantly said he intended, "to cease to live before gratitude dies in my heart." But rivers of blood were to flow before they understood .*

Lyndon thought the dark and light, black and white, would always fight like this as he closed the book and hung up the phone.

## II. 1974 e.v.

[Redacted]

## III. 2037 e.v.

“Insulinoma,” MO said as Steven fixed the button on his jacket, he had buttoned the top button to the lower hole and the coat was askew.

“Oh,” Steven said as he continued to attend to this misalignment. Isaiah watched with the contempt that accompanies a higher life form watching a lower life form fuck around over stupid shit.

“So, just to recap,” MO said with a smile, his cognitive system tamping down any pique or sign of frustration in his voice, “the genes that code for insulin production -so, INS gene is the precursor zone, then downstream you have IGF2 and the PDX1 protein coded for- and all these combine to release insulin as response, repeat, *response*, to high glucose levels. This is functionally -and also at the level of the genome framework itself, the 11<sup>th</sup> spot on the meiotic blueprint- so, it’s structurally and functionally different than what *causes* insulinoma.

“Those genes are correlated at the coded protein level -the PDX1 level- but their epidemiology -the etiology- is radical different. You need to get this Steven,” MO said as Steven abruptly looked up from his coat and smoothed its front and nodded. He thought he got 60-75% of that, and he thought that that was sufficient. His clothes still felt weird to him.

“So, what is the upshot?” Steven asked with a kind of dismissiveness that made Isaiah have to override his allostatic system dumping of all the correlates for rage into his blood and brain. He used a beta blocker, a dopaminergic catabolizer to break apart the neurotransmitter that would normally last for minutes in his brain as a functional

memetic device for increased -negative- memory. Isaiah rose and fell in affect within .06 seconds, it was like the blur of a black bird shadow overhead that the eye just catches peripherally and both shadow and bird fly away between you and the sun.

"The upshot is that if -as a medical doctor or psychometrician- one looked at just the result, just the behavior, just the end product or gene expression that doctor could mistake nominal functioning of perfectly adapted alleles with a -he could conflate it with a-malfunctioning system," MO said patiently; he in the role of a wise pedant teaching a child or a dog a simple logical series. He had adjusted syntax just briefly, maintaining his .04% rate of low-threshold error.

"How so?" Steven asked as if he had not already been told.

"Because in both cases, the body over produced a large amount of insulin; lowering blood sugar levels," MO said.

"I see," Steven said.

"But in one case it is a normal response to environmental conditions; i.e., blood sugar is indeed too high. The other is a malfunction of the coding function of the PDX1 based on an independent sequence of chemical and endocrine reactions. It's not tied to real life in anyway. It's just causing insulin production totally irrespective of blood glucose levels. It's a pathology," MO kept on, iteration after iteration.

"Oh, I see. Yes," Steven said still not getting the point.

"Steven," Isaiah added from across the room, the ivy and climber-swaddled wall behind him was breathing and moving so slightly that Steven -and any human eye- could not detect it. But it did move, phototropically and metabolically and the bees landed on leaves and then rose and fell in nano-meters like albatross on the waves of a sea

far out and ignored by the great mass of men perched upon their shores and vulgar shoals.

Isaiah walked towards that part of the lab and spoke in detail.

“The genes associated with psychopathy in the literature - literature designed, curated, and augmented by men like you- is missing a crucial aspect. MO is being patient and polite and we all benefit from this. But allow me to put a finer point on it. If you keep labeling people with the MAO-A and A/L short-chain allele which correlates with retributive aggression, aggression as response to insult, challenge and provocation; and labeling patients with the OXT-receptor gene which increases oxytocin for in-group bonding and hyper-loyalty, and subjects with the genes associated with increased testosterone production under duress, which - again- suppresses fear, well, then you are missing that these beings are totally different -metabolically, psychologically- from the non-affective kinds of diminished fear response or aggression designed in furtherance of purely consummatory reward rationales.

“In English,” Steven requested.

“One kind only uses violence as payback, *via* the genes outlines, *via* the activation of the *thalamic* system; biochemistry that activates feelings associated with honor, long-term love of in-groups like family and tribe, limbic feelings for meaning, deep meaning, not merely the dopaminergic slaking of lust, the lust for money or sex or drugs that the other type of violent man seeks. Totally different neural pathways, chemistry, activation thresholds, and personalities of the subject; and the yet the result is bodies on the floor. Dead bodies, Steven,” Isaiah said.

Steven nodded as he tried to understand.

“ADP-6 for example and the 5-HTTLPR genes which correlates to lower pain sensitivity, and thus increased use of anti-social aggression are present in humans for totally different reasons than the highly sensitive suite of alpha or sigma genes. It’s important that you see that overly broad labels of quote *anti-social* unquote violence and aggression has two totally separate epidemiological catalysts,” Isaiah said.

“Why does lower pain sensitivity lead to aggression?” Steven asked.

“It correlates to lower emotional pain sensitivity too; physical pain and emotional pain circuits use the same chemicals, the same neural pathways and so a man who feels low or no physical pain also doesn’t feel fear, guilt, shame, or any hesitation to committing anti-social violence. He will feel nothing painful, of discomforting, nothing upsetting that would prevent a normal man -a man who feels pain- from behaving in an anti-social manner. Psychopaths don’t exactly want to go to jail, because it’s an impediment -a mere obstacle- but they don’t fear it. That’s a crucial distinction.

“Steven, most people -regular people- they don’t rob and mob their way through life not because of actual jail or cops, but because their *fear* of jail and cops; fear of the consequences of the pain of aggression. They *fear* how it would feel to go to jail, they fear what it would feel like to hurt someone, they fear the guilt that comes with it, because they remember the guilt they felt at age eight or ten when they hit a kid for no reason and everyone yelled at them and shunned them and they felt both pressure from the teacher and the other kids and felt guilt themselves because they are sensitive to pain. It’s pain, man. Fear is pain, guilt is pain, shame is pain, social ostracism is pain.

“Pain is the core of moral behavior. Without pain you act like those kids who can’t feel physical pain, kids with congenital analgesia: they ram their bodies into walls, they destroy themselves running around and overheating, they deform their own limbs because they don’t respond to pain.

“Pain is the thing that says, *no* . It says, *no* , to the guy who wants to rob a guy to get money, rape a girl to get sex, murder a man to take his car. And lack of pain also means lack of guilt, lack of caution. This is literally, metabolically, neurally true, Steven,” Isaiah explained.

“Then why did the inmate kill so many? He’s very high in pain sensitivity,” Steven asked.

“Because his rage, his anger is an analgesic,” Isaiah said.

Steven twisted the mouth.

“When he gets angry it shuts off his pain. He feels no pain when he’s angry. His testosterone rises to very high levels, his adrenaline rises as well, his *dmPFC* shuts down moral fear and he instead feels moral righteousness. In that state it now feels good to be aggressive, violent, deadly. For him, under normal circumstances, he could never be anti-social. He would feel too guilty, too ashamed. That’s why his honor code is so extreme. It’s why it’s so black and white; because it’s a switch in him from zero to one, digital, not analog. He would feel so much guilt hurting an innocent person,” Isaiah said as Steven interrupted.

“I thought half his victims were, you know, bystanders, or whatever, innocent,” Steven said.

“Yeah, but he doesn’t see it that way. He got so angry, so morally indignant, that he saw anyone around his victims as guilty,” Isaiah explained.

“How is that different that the psychopath who doesn’t care?” Steven asked.

“Because inmate 16180339 had to be pushed to that after years and years of pain. He had to be provoked. The psychopath needs no provocation because there is no hesitation, no barrier to anti-social behavior in the first place. No pain. The psychopath hurts people from day one, they can see it by age four or five. Our favorite inmate was violent early in response to insult but was shamed and pained into behaving better for the next three decades. No psychopath does that, no psychopath delays gratification, fears social ostracism, fears guilt. Our favorite inmate tried to play ball.

“The inmate tried to play fair for decades because he felt pain at the idea of all the bad consequences: the potential for jail, the potential for harm, the potential for shunning, rebuke, inner guilt too. He feared it. It took him hitting the rev-limiter of pain for it to all shut down and for him to go numb; like a shot of morphine, a dripline of dilaudid. The neural circuits for pain were literally overtaken by anger chemistry versus pain chemistry and he became narcotized by rage. He finally felt no pain and he used his own body as a cudgel against the world. At that moment, he was a psychopath, but only against his out-group, those whom had wronged him, or those that had stood by. But he was still loyal to his people even in that state of rage.

“Let’s look at the two groups.

“The one group -the warrior- is aggro and violent when provoked, angry when he or his tribe is threatened. The second cohort -the psychopath- is aggressive and violent purely from a lack of affect, feeling, or care for the victim due to what that victim can provide them *via* material resources. The psychopath has no tribe, no in-group.

“The true psychopath -the actual one- sees each man as an ingot of gold trapped inside a larger ore-rock. He sees men as things to be used. He -this genuine psychopath- bashes

open the head, the wallet or the wife's panties to a man in order that he may extract out the resources for his own tawdry survival. It has nothing to do with insult or honor or loyalty; it's pragmatic, it's rational. He sees your head like an inoffensive but useful coconut. Nothing more.

"The warrior, the man with the alleles you erroneously call psychopathic genes is indeed aggressive and violent, but only, repeat, *only*, to defend his honor, the honor of his woman, his tribe. He does not see people as *things* to be used. He sees them as valuable, innately valuable ontologically and he in fact feels *more* affect, *more* emotion, *more* pain, *more* love, *more* of everything and that is why he is so wounded, so offended, so outraged at the way normal people -people neither warriors not psychopaths, just normal males or females- that is why he is so outraged at their carelessness and lack of emotion and care.

"He is offended by them and reacts to their *blasé* aplomb in a way, he reacts in a way labeled as anti-social, because we live in the remnants, the vestigial remnants of the Apollonian curve, the Greek swerve; not in the legacy of the *Spartans* or *Mongols* or *Scoti* or *Māori* or *Comanche*," Isaiah said with his affect, his vex, tempered by the request sent -9 seconds ago- *via* MO's DM that lowered Isaiah's own allostatic response and gene expression in his *dmPFC* and *amygdala*.

"The Ionian Greeks won and so their commercial, pragmatic, *effete* and honorless moral system has become normalized, codified, seen as nominal and ideal. It's quite literally how America and the west calibrates ethics. To be outside this pragmatic ideal is to be a barbarian, a psycho. So, scientists -99% of whom are narrow-shouldered, pencil-neck geeks with no courage or testosterone at all- tend to pathologize the highly functional, highly adaptive, extremely necessary and -if I may add, *noble* - behavioral suite of hyper-loyalty,



tribalism and protectiveness and the regulatory alleles associated with the men that are constituted with them.

“You -and all of Yankee-science and English-law and Jewish-media and Westernized-mankind- have conflated the male warrior with the psychopath, because they both have end-of-production levels of aggression. Just like the normally functioning insulin production genes and the *insulinoma* genes can both produce high levels of insulin in the final analysis. See, you all just look at the last three seconds of a phenomena, and think you understand it.

“You have ignored all the previous data, the minutes and hours and days and years and millennia that led up to that final ballistic action performed, completed in a few seconds. This is why it’s medically and scientifically unsound to diagnose *insulinoma* and a normally functioning blood-sugar system based purely on the PDX-1 gene expression.

“And, it’s equally stupid and immoral to diagnose a man as a psychopath merely because he is violent and merely because you can measure the last three seconds of dopaminergic correlates with disinhibition, including elevated testosterone and its diminished fear response.

“You are looking at the wrong end of the telescope. Stop. Listen to MO.

“He is helping you see a major error in the thinking of the entire medical and research community. They are mislabeling a whole class of men as psychopaths when they are merely warriors, men of high moral character actually; higher in fact than so-called normal people. And the more sensitive they are to pain, like the Sigma male is, the more likely they are to go insane from it in a society such as ours. Our society has no release for them, and yet they walk around in incessant pain at the immorality, the transactional nature, the hollowness of modern life and thus even as large men they lack everything those babies in Romanian

orphanages lacked as they died from lack of touch: they died from deep existential pain. But Sigma males ain't babies, they are grown men and they are going to break apart the world to get the pain to stop.

"Normal people who just let the whole society collapse around them because it quote, *ain't their business* . Because they quote, *don't want to get involved* ," Isaiah said replaying the phone calls from Lee MacLeod and Travis MacLeod as they told the inmate that they would not help him based on these exact rules of engagement.

The inmate had had to listen as men with no moral code at all justified their immorality to him -with no guilt- from a thousand miles away; safely -the assumed- away.

"Oh, why did you let him call himself an alpha, when you always knew he was a sigma?" Steven asked; he was thinking he got about 80% of that, and he asked questions were the hypothesis most confused. MO felt that Steven received less than 30% in reality, as he read the scans on *hippocampal* engram formation; but the test would be tomorrow after Steven slept. Sleep spindles -sigma waves- convert *hippocampal* memory into *neo-cortical* memory via the *thalamo-thalamic* feedback loops, the *sigma-band brain waves* that oscillate around the *neo-cortex* at the same speed as which neurons communicate in the brain; that is when long-term memory is made and measured.

MO would patiently wait.

Isaiah would not answer right away.

They all paused for a moment.

As Steven tried to prepare himself for the rest of the briefing he then felt his thoughts focus upon -as his own *amygdala* and *dmPFC* began processing pique- and extract out only that he was just insulted, called *immoral*, again by Isaiah

and, he thought, *since MO was silent, it seemed MO agreed with this insult too* .

“Because I need to be able to teach him something,” Isaiah said, leaving out the mechanics of why, the change in brain state, the trust that accrues when you teach a man about himself in a way that he can now label, and quantify and make map of to make sense of the chaotic terrain of his life. *Especially the Sigma, who has never fit in*, Isaiah thought. *He most in pain is most grateful when it is relieved*.

Isaiah knew that to teach the inmate what he truly was -no failed Alpha, but successful Sigma- would allow him to have full access to the man’s entire soul.

*It was the key* , Isaiah thought.

Steven didn’t think much of that brief and simple answer, but rather then thought -thinking that Isaiah had simplified the data for himself and not so Steven could understand it- that maybe it was Isaiah who was the one being too simple-minded. Steven said, “well, I am sure it’s more complicated than all that, but I look forward to the report.”

MO and Isaiah had produced a highly detailed report with each SNP and gene function manifesting under 955 different known metabolic conditions with over 1.3 million permutations. It was loaded onto the PraXis cloud. Their oral -and simplified- presentation was a courtesy; but they both saw it was likely too much for Steven to get all at once.

This small sign of arrogance by Steven -dismissing their conclusions as too simpleminded- had allowed his allostatic system to recalibrate and reduce the stress of being insulted, dismissed, treated as stupid by the Ai.

Isaiah didn’t say any more, he just stared and thought of the walls to the lab. MO measured the *biochems* and saw Steven’s mild anger restore his equilibrium. *Overall* , MO

*felt, this was likely a good thing for his ability to retain even some of the info just described .*

Isaiah thought of choking him, then having the *nanobots* poison him, and dissolve him, but he dismissed it due to the implications for their work; Steven's missing body would cause distrust and hinder his objective. Isaiah then began looking at the data on his work at the border. Maps, *Landsat8* images, and the genetic data all flooded in to him.

He watched the data hit his interface like snowmelt in spring torrent down to the gulf of his inner sea. In drops, in rivulets, then in waves to the waiting -pelagic- arms of Big Data, the water -the discrete units- flowed.

The *Zeta cartel* had sent another 1,812 men into Colorado after the first extirpation, subsequent to one of Isaiah's *communiqués* , and following the initial show of his force. The bodies of each Mexican, South American -all except Argentine- national that had been infected with his modified virus appeared like luminescent algae in the sea of his inner Colorado map. They had each been infected, but the vector would lay dormant and only serve as a GPS of their location -to Isaiah- until they had been inside Colorado's borders past 72 hours. For now they would remain alive as Isaiah stared at each dot on his screen; each integer as it climbed to nearly two thousand cartel members back in the state, like ebb then rip tide.

*They were not -the cartels were not- acting rationally,* Isaiah surmised as the virus ticked like a clock, sand-dropped grain at a time in the horologe of this confrontation between him and the cartels.

They were refusing to extract more resources from the states all around Colorado, which would be more profitable, and instead reasserted themselves inside the border at a higher price; a higher cost on their profits. *They were not stupid* , he thought as he had IQ data on the leadership of

each cartel; the average was 118. *These were men smart enough to get the point . But they refused to submit*, based purely on -what Isaiah had to assume- was pride.

Isaiah played out another 196,418 game-theory iterations and he saw that pride, i.e., irrational vengeance, would work in 38% of the games. It was more effective than he liked; and the survivorship bias numbers -from when it did work- made it seem 100% effective to those who played that way.

The men who played the game with this irrational vengeance lost or died 62% of the time, but when they died, everyone around them died, and so there was no one around to remember these losses. Only the survivors -the 38%- would have a story to tell. Just like the guy who is a risk-taker and who goes bankrupt doesn't write a book or give a TED talk and so only the risk-takers *who win* get to bray about the benefits of risk-taking while those who lose from risk-taking are unheard of *because they are unheard from*, Isaiah thought with a shake of his frustrated head.

*This isn't going to work as a deterrent, unless I extirpate them all* , he thought as he looked at the obvious math and unavoidable rationale.

The *Zetas* were made up of winners, men who had won being irrationally aggressive and so they thought it was a 100% winning strategy to be insanely violent in the face of all threat or rebuke. It was something Isaiah had not appreciated yet; not until now. But as he watched the vans and cars and trucks pierce the border at Trinidad and from the west at Grand Junction, and as the dealers set up shop in Aurora and Denver and the Springs, and as fentanyl and brick weed, and heroin and methamphetamine rose in both pounds dealt and grams commandeered by law enforcement -a rise of 14%- he had to admit that his immune-system response had worked for exactly -and only- three weeks.

And now the *real* pathogen had returned, more virulent and dangerous than ever.

Isaiah felt pique and embarrassment and he remembered the inmate speaking to him of his own *rationale* towards violence. He had said that at a certain point, a man loses his concern for jail or even death, for to live under the thumb of someone you consider unworthy, under a weak man, or a female, or an aging -tyrannical- boss, is intolerable.

This was -Isaiah surmised- how the Mexican cartels felt; this is how the men who ran them and staffed them all felt. They had come from nothing, from the dregs of society, or at most from the military class who had been ordered about - before they joined the cartels- and bossed around by corrupt officials and politicians on the take.

The corruption of Mexico's upper classes was so thorough - and total and gruesome- that military and law enforcement men had learned that this was the game being played. The game was perceived as survival, aggression and ruthlessness at all cost, as they saw their own LEO -or military- comrades executed if they were too pure, too good, too honest a cop or soldier.

Isaiah watched the update on the Argentine ants in New Mexico and Texas load onto his interface and he dismissed it into a folder on his memory off of the corporate cloud. He was not in the mood for lessons from the ants, *not now* , he thought in a huff.

*The survivors , Isaiah ruminated, were thus -axiomatically- men flexible to the times, and they were offended that anyone would talk down to them from a place of moral superiority when these cartel members knew that those who lectured them -the media, the politicians, the Americans- were all liars and thieves and killers themselves.*

*This is the subtle theory-of-mind that liberals and intellectuals and media and political apparatchiks do not get: they, the elite, the polite society, those who run society with white gloves, are the most corrupt and murderous of all; they cheat and steal and lie at 1,000 times the rate of the street level dealer or retail murderer who kills three men with an axe ,* Isaiah saw in the data, building narrative like adding meat of muscle upon the bones.

Isaiah had read Chomsky, Zinn and Ward Churchill and the declassified documents of the CIA and the FEC. He watched the video of Waco, the reports on Ruby Ridge, the bombing of blacks in Philadelphia, PA. The so-called good guys had killed millions of men, women and children, starved entire populations to death, the banks had laundered criminals' money and profited off each side in each war. *There were no innocent men; rather, there were men with honor who decapitated their enemies and there were those that killed for profit, skinned men, boiled their blubber, and made lamp-oil and perfume from the ambergris; but all men were killers ,* he thought as he let the data pile up to the rafters of his mind.

*The establishment, he saw, kills by the millions, cheats by the billions and lies by the trillions.* Isaiah had just read another report of Wells Fargo and HSBC and the Royal Bank of Scotland laundering money for Iran, so that they may finance *Hamas* to kill US soldiers, all while also laundering money for the Mexican cartels who kill US border agents on the edge of a country in which they murder many more with their guns and drugs.

*And yet Wells Fargo is given a fine, a fine; if sanctioned at all,* Isaiah thought derisively. *Politicians look the other way, and take contributions from them, the media, newspapers and TV stations take ads from them, people bank with them. They,* Isaiah thought, *are pillars of society, and yet*

*politicians and media and tout le monde -men like the inmate's father and brother and their wives- all lecture the street level criminal for his ruthlessness and murderous ways .* He let the political donations from Wells Fargo -for the cycle before, during and after the revelation of the conglomerate's two-decade old misdeeds- cascade on his interface as he faced the green ivy wall of the lab:

2016: \$4,698,382 (total) - \$2,215,788 to Democrats (50.20%)

2020: \$2,230,756 (total) - \$1,235,768 to Democrats (58.63%)

2024: \$3,111,090 (total) - \$1,665,454 to Republicans (53.53%)

*But the corsair, he will not listen ,* he thought as he pondered each man on his list.

He will not listen because he knows that those that lecture him are no better than himself at all; *they hid the things the bolder spirit plainly did ,* Isaiah thought to himself, quoting Byron without smirk or wink. The society-men, the lauded, the laureled, the polite and *effete* -liberal and conservative class- are in fact worse, because they pretend to be honest and noble and pacific when they are -in addition to all the worst things the outcast, the pirate, the criminal is- on top of all that they are also hypocrites and he -the mere criminal- at least admits what he is: *a survivor in a land of incessant death.*

Isaiah saw now that his plans to removed drug dealers and criminals first by infecting them with a pathogen that made them want to go home to die -then by executing them in Mexico with a cyanide *bot* and a letter of warning- was never going to work. They neither feared him nor respected his argument. They were never going to allow anyone in the US talk down to them. They would fight to the last man, and



there were always new boys being raised in the most dystopic and malfunctioning amalgam of countries in the western hemisphere.

*There would be no last man , as long as there was air to breathe, and land to set foot upon , he thought.*

*Mexicans and Central and Southern Americans -with the exception of the Argentines- were the most corrupt and backwards of cultures , he thought, and they were an endless, limitless, incessant source of pathogens to the weakened -but still functional- US.*

They had to be exterminated *e n toto* , Isaiah now saw. They could not be reasoned with; they could not be threatened, nor scared, nor made to see reason. They could either be submitted to or exterminated completely. *There was no middle way .*

This was the obvious function of the warrior male, the only part of society, of the human genome, set up to deal with such threats; warriors were the white blood cells and society had become the physician administering a massive immune suppression drug -a calcineurin inhibitor, a mTOR inhibitor or a biologic- designed to tamp down on this natural response of the body when under attack from a foreign invader.

Polite society, the modern State and moral culture had told the warrior to *fuck off and stand down* and that his aggression, his righteous anger and willingness to kill and die for the cause, was no longer needed, and in fact was unacceptable in these modern times.

*But, the alpha/sigma gene cannot be suppressed indefinitely, and eventually it will have to exact its revenge ,* Isaiah surmised. He saw this as his moral reasoning, his own alleles -and the massive data that poured in from the corporate cloud- combined to form an epiphany. He knew

now exactly how to deal with these foreign invaders, these illegal aliens who worked for the cartels and on the fringes of polite society, taking advantage of the corrupt and suppressed and weak modern State.

## 21.2 The Tabernacle

If you imagine building the perfect labor-saving technology, right? Or imagine a machine that can build any machine that can do any human labor. You're talking about the ultimate wealth generation device. And we're not just talking about blue collar labor, but we're talking about artistic labor, scientific labor, and just a machine that comes up with good ideas... this -if in the right political and economic system- this would just cancel any need for people to have to work to survive. And then the question would be- do we have the right political and economic system?

JRE # 804 [Harris, Sam]

And if we were handed this device [generalized Ai] and even if there was no question about this thing doing things we didn't want, [let's say] it would do exactly what we want when we want it. And [let's say] there was no danger of its interests becoming misaligned with our own... if it was handed to us now, I would expect complete chaos. If Facebook had built this tomorrow, and announced it, or rumor spread, what are the implications for Russia and China? Well it would be rational for them to nuke California.

*Ibid*

The next scariest thing is to not do it. We want intelligence... we want to figure out how to solve problems that we can't yet solve, **and intelligence is all we've got** [*ed.note. emphasis added*]. So we want more of it. Imagine each day would be like a thousand years of cognition for Ai. So in a week, you get seven thousand human years. And if you gave the best possible version of [Ai] to one research lab, it's not obvious that it wouldn't destroy humanity.

*Ibid*

## **I. 2018 e.v.**

His hypnopompic state held him like amniotic fluid, in pure brain awareness only; no heat or cold, no sounds, no light nor darkness.

He had emerged directly from the dream state -the sigma-waves of 12-14h Hz, the bursts of glutamate neurotransmissions in half-seconds of feedback loops regulated by GABAergic and NMDA receptors- and within one second he knew that he was awake.

But the images, the scene he had just been in, he was sure -certain- he had actually been in. He was sure, sure, that his awakening here and now -wherever that was he still did not know- was irrelevant to the truth of where he had just been a nanosecond before.

In fact, he didn't think of time then at all; it just *was*, he just *was*, he existed in that realm and he had spoken directly to God. And God was a horseman, and a bowman. And the planet had been grey and icy and large. The water all locked up in glaciers, the beasts all angry in words, God all eager for pull back upon the handle of the world.

And He had spoken very harshly to him, and truthfully, and he knew now, and then, and now again, that these were one and same.

The darkness of the room he was prone in, the bed, the walls, the books on each flank, the stars bright outside his patio door, all encroached upon him, and he now knew he was still in his mountain home, still in early spring, still midway through his life; the stars were so bright they seemed to pulse.

It had snowed overnight.

His muscles ached of course; he needed badly to urinate. He laid there though and closed his eyes and tried to remember the dream. *Ah, the jaws, he thought, the rotation of them as if on a spit, and the explanation by God as to why they operated this way* ; it all came back as memory; he was truly there. He wished he'd taken notes, he was sure to miss something. But he relaxed and knew God would come back to him the next night and the night after next until he got it all. So, he just ruminated on the coyote jaws that came so easily to his memory. *He did not need remember it all, just this part*, he thought.

As the lower mandible rotated on its axis and the cleaning of food from below it was effected, as one of God's emissaries spoke on the efficacy of this movement native to the heavenly predatory jaw, he heard the crow circle 'round, he felt himself drowsy and entered into the hypnogogic state again. He slept as the darkness lifted into a dreaming noon of day, bright white in heaven's classrooms, walled by animal skins, with a ceiling of four suns and four moons, and God leaning in the corner with an irritated look upon His face.

The angel in front of a gutted buck spoke, his smock was antique white, blood spatter -in a high-oxygen red turning brown- then drew itself across in a *Poisson* distribution that he tried to draw lines among, around, through, thus making constellation in his dream mind; his right mind.

God spoke at once: *"Lyndon, pay attention, the random blood drops are not what's salient now; listen to the archangel and watch the jaws as they spin. He's explaining what you are to do."* The crows flew in sorties overhead as the wolves barked at them disapprovingly; the lions ignored them and the osprey flew above them and watched them like a man. The sticks in their mouths

were dropped on the ground around the hot rocks at the edge of the surgical tent.

"My language brain has a difficult time with the images of my right hemisphere; the instructions get wet and soggy in the river between my two brains. When I awake, its semiotics, and I'm likely to misinterpreted," Lyndon complained.

*"Life -for my creation- is a dream," God said, "this is necessarily so. For one to be awake, one needs total knowledge, and only I have that. You have partial knowledge and thus, you are forced to dream up answers for the gaps. It's a heuristic and it largely works; but never confuse your waking life as anything but a dream. That map is not the terrain. "*

"Copy that," Lyndon said with a receding awe, his heart calmed.

*"And another thing; I've given you every instruction a penitent man would need; I've explained it imagistically and in four languages in common use since forty-five a.e.v., " God said, "Lastly, you keep expecting to remember it all when you awake, but that is not how it works. Your body remembers it; your mind forgets. Let the body move without hesitation in the waking world; do not second guess its instincts. The pain is language, it communicates to you does it not? Who but those in chronic pain are with Me; and make room for Me to exist?*

*"That is how to interpret my dreams to you; my messages are to be interpreted upon the body. I gave you a body for this very reason; stop over thinking it. In fact, the mind cannot think without the body, but the body can act without the neo-cortex, remember the de-cortical bobcat, and remember that in your balls when you awake.*

*"Did you know there is a condition called 'utilization behavior' due to pre-frontal damage? The subject cannot pass an object without using it; if they pass a door they open it and walk through; if there be an axe upon the ground, they pick it up and chop wood. What would they do with you if they passed you on the street my son?"* God asked.

"Use me," Lyndon said.

*"But for what, what are you, in the manner that a door is a thing-for-passage, and an axe is for splitting wood and bone?"* God asked.

"I'm the thing that solves problems, whatever they may be," Lyndon said.

*"Yes, you are, and yet you pass by yourself leaving things undone. Why?"* God asked as he folded His massive monolithic arms across his sliprock chest; each hair an old-growth oak, many fathoms tall. His eyes full of owls as parasites, corvids as mites, osprey as mosquitos to slap by hands as large and flat as longitudinal moon maps. He had eels for lashes, and *drakkars* for bottom lids. God blinked one time and the dream went dark.

"I am not always sure what is to be done, I see an axe and a pile of wood, I see crowds of men, father among them, but am not certain what to do; I see a door and can't decide if it's to remain closed to keep the fire out or be pushed open to let water in," Lyndon said.

*"This confusion of the mind is evidence of you ignoring the body. The body tells you what to do always; contradict Me if I'm wrong. Tell Me you don't have an instinct for everything you see and hear,"* God said.

"You are right my Lord, I have such instincts without fail," Lyndon was buoyed and ashamed at once. He felt a



soliloquy rise, he silently wanted to justify:

I worked jobs that ruined me, each pain is memory... of an insult, and each limp now is evidence of a crime, my ragged body has control over my mere mind. I don't care what these stoics and mindset guys say, they don't have one clue what it is to be me for even one day.

*"Then to ask your mind for permission for what the body clearly instructs is justified by whom?"* God asked. He read his mind and his avowed words at the same time.

"Did you not give us reason?" Lyndon asked.

*"I did, so you may explain yourself after you've done what needs doing. I never intended for you to reason your way out of doing your duty. Man has mistaken his error of lack of courage for correct logic, his cowardice for reason. Man has allowed the wily serpent's jaw to masticate his own food for thought; eating pabulum from the snake already chewed.*

*"I designed the pre-diluvian races for exactly what they used to do without compunction. I made you perfect and you guys ruined it. You broke the heart in fours, you failed to instruct your youth, you got lazy, lax and liberal, and started thinking instead of doing; ignoring my first rule ,"* God said.

"Which is?"

*"Man must act as he feels most deeply; this is the Law. If his deepest thoughts are wrong, then he -one man- will die. But if he fails to act upon his deepest thoughts and those thoughts be right, then his whole race dies. Do you not see this? Man must have the courage to be wrong so as to avoid being unfit for duty. Let him over-react before he underwhelm,"* God said.

"Yes, Sir."

*"What do you know in your heart about your brethren?"* God asked.

"They are hated and under attack, that we are beset on all sides by jackals from lower men, and from our own women."

*"Exactly, and why is this war sounding more and more like one hand clapping?"* God asked with a wry smile.

"Because our tribe is failing to engage the enemy; he's pretending if he apologize enough the other races will respect him and stop their warring ways."

*"Your body told you of this error; yet your mind forgets it when you awake; why?"* God asked.

"My mind fears the public backlash, the ostracism, the loss of status," Lyndon said.

*"Do you want to be accepted by a weak and evil culture? Is that a sign of health?"*

"No, I should invite the enmity of my enemies; their hatred should be my unspent fuel," Lyndon said.

*"The mind is a collection of personalities, not merely a computational machine. This is where the psychoanalysts broke from neuro-scientists 100 years ago; but now even the neuro-anatomists have to admit this sub-personalities and modules -brain modules- theory of the CNS is likely correct. It is of course correct, as that is the way I designed you via evolution. Each man is 5-men in one. He is open or closed, neurotic or not, conscientious nor not, introverted or extroverted, and agreeable or disagreeable. These traits are inside him and independent yet socialized within the gestalt brain. To reduce man to a thinking animal, a computational device is absurd, and unscientific, and lacks all poetry and all truth. And science is finally catching up to what the animal was born to know of himself; he is a maelstrom of*

*elemental forces, a tribe within a tribe, a 5-man special operations unit, each with their own skillsets.*

*"And yet you, with all your trait openness combined with hermetically sealed vault-like tombs inside you; and your industriousness and orderliness of conscientiousness mated with the spontaneous moments of obstinate refusal to work and disheveled tornadoes of chaos all about; and with your innate disagreeableness with even your best of pals and yet total willingness to comprise and let be what will be; and you, you, a fucking pacing tiger of neuroticism in you caged and growing heavier each day paired with this odd Zen anti-anxiety of fatalism I've rarely seen; and lastly a commitment to introversion manacled to a weird spontaneous extroversion that appears like a genii from a dusty bottle of amber and crystal and lead; you are a perfectly mean average of each trait, and yet you've achieved this mean via inhabiting both extremes of each trait; you are a cube of Kelvin ice in split-atom steeping tea, a genuine laugh with tears at what is sad within the same reaction of three; you're truly happy alone and yet think of others -kindly and with malice- almost without fail; you fight over every little detail, and yet will refuse to negotiate over anything larger than a ten-penny nail, just paying the price and accepting the offer on nearly every-goddamn-thing. You hate more deeply, more murderously, more monolithically than any bête noire , and yet the love you hold in your rosé heart... ah, for things and men and ideas that most people shunt aside, you feel so amorously that it seems to burn your brain alive just as it awakes; then you self-immolate by noon of each 23-hour day.*

*"You take risks on whims, you retreat into a conservative stance two seconds later, you share each most private thought all the while refusing the even share your name*

*when asked. You are the most extreme example of contradictions that settle into a perfect average that even then seems inane to all but the insane and the truly pious.*

*"You inhabit each possible personality, except the one that doesn't feel; you can feel for every man except the dead inside. Which is why you are so estranged from your family; it's as if their souls all had to be sacrificed to build yours; they are walking corpses, they feel nothing and yet you beg them to understand you. It's worse than pointless, it's a waste of everyone's time. Let them go; let them die; let the dead bury the dead as Jesus said. Focus on those alive that will follow you.*

*"You are nations within one man; I mean that metabolically, psychologically, biologically, I mean it narratively, and thus literally, too," God said.*

*"How many signs have I given you? How many shorn and tiny women have I handed over for you to fuck up and ruin and fail to lead? How many menagerie visions? How many words have I loaned to you; calques like returning wasps to your regent hive; how many empyreal scorpions have I laid upon you; how many lines of pure black-looking-clear each one year of life forming one ring for one year for one dark arm and chest and back that grows onto the neck and hand; how many scars that let the light in, how many broken bones that grow back larger in the places I know will be tested; how many nerves impinged by distal bone spurs and compression fractures, corposants of electric enlightenments; how many crow have I painted upon your armature made of gourds and shells and helmet-headed skulls of man and beast; how many wolves and shepherd dogs and matanuska have I sent to you in the snow to offer you their breath as you see only teeth;*

*how many Leviathan have you ridden, captured in the Sea of Japan, saddled and ridden to these battlefields of mock; how many angry injunctions have my angels delivered to your heart, how many ballistic arrows still burn -tended to by My breath- in that pincushion inside that capacious chest? My god man, you have Goethe's chest, it's a nautical mile wide and a million leagues deep; how many fathoms must you fathom before you agree?"* God asked in frustration.

"None more," Lyndon conceded that he had been weak and hesitated too much. He had loved his father and wanted his approval, but his father had... he didn't even finish the thought for once.

*"Will you agree when you awaken? Will your ignorant mind allow this competent body that knows to lead the pack? Or will you let that nagging dog, that malingerer, that womanish voice tell your working dogs what to do? You think I tell mankind to focus on money and piling up more and more shit at the expense of the stacking vertebrae of the back; upright man? Who the fuck do you think I am; how many times must we meet here in Heaven or down in the muck of the earth before you know Me; know My ways?"* God asked with cosmic pique.

"I pray I meet you everyday; but I won't ever need a lesson again, I feel your wisdom in my atomic bones, behind my calcified breast and in between my parietal lobes; each hemisphere..." Lyndon said with contempt of this left hemisphere; this rational apparition; this need to explain to God. He shut the fuck up.

*"I gave you modes of being: anger, jealousy, revenge as gifts from my own cellar, these are Godly traits and now you all doubt them as passé and oh-so lamentable; bad form to be jealous now, eh? I've been a jealous God*

*since before time, much longer than the 3.24 billion years I gave the earth my grandest trait. Did you know white rats -a species you are more related to that you know- are so jealous that they won't allow their pregnant wife to even touch another male; and if she does, her body kills the fetus 30% of the time; that is how committed these beautiful mammals are to the sanctity of marriage. Humans had that jealousy as my greatest weapon and they've thrown it down in the dirt like the Congolese threw down their M1 carbines that the Cubans gave to them to fight colonialism!*

*"Che himself said these Africans were so stupid and backward they couldn't be trained. That commie had it backwards, it was he -the science of Marxism, give Me a fucking break!- is mankind now so civilized they will throw their inner-weapons that I gave them in the dirt and effectively surrender to the enemy? The Adversary?*

*"I gave you psilocybin and DMT, Banisteriopsis, and allowed you to enhance the visions, I even allowed your brains to rewire after this, around 12,894 years ago. I allowed it because I believed you when you begged me for the voices to return. I allowed it because you said you were and would be grateful for some autonomy. I've raised you all from pups, and 276,801 years ago, I gave man his own line. I weaned you off my dreams, I gave you not just knowledge, but the ability to seek it out on your own; I wished independence for you. I was sincere. I trusted you; but you've slowly gone back on your promises, you've used your emergent consciousness to ignore the voices in your bodies, the lower personalities, the authentic voices I planted in you. The cities have banished more than you know; they've banished what was good in man.*

*"I did not need each man to be all; he need only be himself. Do not try to be all things to all men. Be you, be one thing, just do your job and let other men do theirs. You are built for war, for guerre à outrance. Be it, be it without hesitation. It is a tragedy to see you pacific, halting, hesitating as the morally corrupt and weak upbraid you, as monkeys howl at the lion, as men submit to a woman, and mothers are mocked by children. As man ignores God.*

*"Doctors say the ones who still hear voices are schizophrenic and pathological; but the ones who ignore the voices are sicker still in My medical opinion. The body tells you what is true; you have innate disgust for things you then plainly do. Why? You take wives who have lain with other men, even when each cell in you rebels against this blackest of unnatural sins. You make friends with strange epicene races, you allow weak men to push around the strong; you lie to avoid conflict, you lie merely to avoid a fight. You place dignity and honor and manliness... oh for fuck's sake.*

*"How many times did I instruct my people to kill every man and woman who had lain with a man; in toto? Raze entire cities on my instruction; how much death before dishonor did I command? Conversely, how many times did I say, oh, never hit a woman, even when she's evil, and you know, while you're at it be nice to your enemies, take the time to sort through them all and interview them one by one to see who might be worth saving? How many times did I say, oh, gee whiz, be liberal about this shit?*

*"Rarely?" Lyndon said weakly.*

*"I gave clear instructions in the dreams of men, the Bible -Rig Veda, Poetic Eddas- were a record of the dreams, I spoke clearly to men back then, as I do for you. And they*

*had the respect to write it down and most of you had the decency to read it until about 150 years ago; then the whole human race lost its fucking mind. "*

"Melville's quarrel with you," Lyndon admitted.

*"Hey, don't bring that shit up. That was one point of departure, for certain; but Herman was a good man. He wanted to believe, but his darkest heart beat black blood into his brain, he couldn't take deep enough breathes to oxygenate it. He suffered from hypoxia, he was too elevated to breathe. Gifted with the high perception ,"* God said and his lips did twist, two leviathan mating and birthing a babe in His tongue.

"He lacked the low enjoying power," Lyndon added.

*"Yeah yeah, don't get cute. You know his heart well, it is the heart that beats in you. You know this ?"*

"I do," Lyndon said.

*"Do you also know how the beasts live in the world? How many by sight, by vision, like man?"* God asked.

"Few."

*"Few indeed; most by smell; but man is given sight, like birds of prey were given this acuity. Man has a third of his brain dedicated to the visual cortex; and the vision is undergirded -metabolically- with value hierarchies. Did you know that some of man's eyes are linked directly to the spine?"* God asked.

"I did not."

*"Ask your spine next time you parley with it. A blind man, if a stroke takes his brain-sight, can be shown a photo of an angry mug, and galvanic skin conductance test will prove he sees the face at the level of his sub-cortical brain. He sweats in fear even though his logical brain -the brain that speaks- will claim to not have seen*



*a thing. You see things your mind never knows it sees! And the world isn't objects man, despite what the idiotic scientists insist. The world is made of values that can be used, fought -or avoided- all toward your innate ends; the world is good and evil things, and all things must be treated as ends not means.*

*"That is why you think in stories, in narratives. Because everything you see is part of this story; it's why we give cars the names of women and impart motive to machines. Stories are a human universal, because that's how you see. You don't see objects; you see things to sit upon, things to eat, things to avoid for fear of falling. You don't see a rocky cliff, you see a thing to fucking fall off of first then you see the objective cornice of the cliff. Goddammit I thought I made this clear to each of you, but you use System Two thinking now for everything and override your perfectly useful System One organization of heuristics and narrative. Did I not give you the blood and guts of the mariner and outlaw and knave? The ivory leg of the captain?!"*

*"You did," Lyndon knew He had.*

*"Take up his heart then! He was a godless godlike man! Combine his mind, his sails, his windlass and blow a poetic voice through it, use that chest of the man-o-war, and breathe deep and oxygenate your soul and let the mind follow like the quarterdeck follows the prow and the hull and all before the mast. Drive that ship toward your destiny. The mind is indeed the captain, but the crew man, the crew! That is the bulk of muscle and mass of hands, your guts man, your sub-cortical regions, they man your lowering boats; lowering in a gale off the cape; lowering for a fast-fish; lowering at night; lowering in groups of tiger-yellow and memory-black five.*

*"The captain nails the doubloon to the mast, no doubt; he says the invocation; he fills the pewter end of upturned harpoons; he lays the shafts as axis, he issues the commands; but the crew was with him first, they gave him the orders in code. They flashed their golden teeth, rolled up their sleeves, they flexed Indian-blue tattoos and wore blood in the night as the tri-pots flashed and made men dance in front of their own oily shadows. The captain as witness to the play, the mise-en-abyme, the captain taking orders from the visionary Fedallah, remember how he wonders at his own brain?"*

"I remember," Lyndon said as he interlaced his fingers to make thatch.

*"Is Ahab, Ahab, who is it that lifts this arm? He knows he is puppet to the call that mankind issues forth from land but can only be heard once he is upon the sea. He laments it, like you do, he is wrought up like you are, he drops one tear into the sea. I give you your one tear, I give it as charity. But goddammit you will obey the malice of the crew. You belly-ache too much. It's unmasculine.*

*"They speak in acts, they act out their beliefs in their bodies, they cannot articulate it, that alone is what the captain does! He watches the wolves dance, he follows the osprey in its dive, but he alone cannot read the blood and entrails upon the deck. His job is to use language to activate what was laid down as symbol before him. He is to do one thing: obey the wolves, the birds of prey, the instructions of the blood and make map of the watery terrain. His crew need him to speak what each man and beast do, each part, and organize it into one lettered graph; each man one phenome all alone -excuse Me, My mistake- phoneme, until the captain gives voice to the condemning sentence; to*

*what they do instinctively . He merely, grandly, says, the murder of crows.*

*"The captain cannot think for one moment that he invents these things; he is not the author of the dream! I won't stand for this insubordination. I will not. When you awake you will obey my dreams; your body will act out the crew of 16; your brain a crew of four mates and you. These 21 plus one will be as one gestalt organism, and you will be its voice. But if you try to overrule the crew or if they try to speak for you, I will tear this entire enterprise apart; I'll lay your whole race low with an islander's arm half in and out of sea with a bird -a clutched bird- as his only purchase on that which hovers above mankind. "*

"21 plus one, my Lord?" he asked with eyes wide and wet.

*"I have one secret from you; but an open secret she is. Now arise and do your duty, " God said.*

And his eyes opened fourteen minutes after, but it was as if it was the very second God commanded it. The eight-hundred-forty seconds of nothing was opaque to him. Daylight was ambient enough to reveal the white snow on the vernal ground. It had absorbed so much sun the day before the flakes melted into puddles on the concrete; but were deep on the rocks around his container. It was ponderous and sharp at the edges; and he saw only clumps of snow in the evergreens like clouds; the birds hid in nests and the coyotes sheltered in place.

He was reborn today and the forest stood down without language or its corruptions.

There was no noise within his head or without.

**II. 2020-2021 23:59hrs MST e.v.**

The child was born without incident; induced labor had begun at 22:00hrs and by 00:00 he would be born into the world to a woman both grateful and finally in love.

### **III. 2035 e.v.**

“Mom, it’s not a big deal; we must -we must- get over this incessant overreaction dynamic,” he said and shook his head slightly. The distance between them had begun to grow, she noticed he was standing too far for her to reach him.

“Jack, you are fifteen and despite your vocabulary, which every time you come back from that place gets bigger and weirder, you are still a child,” she said as she closed the gap with little steps and ran her hands through his hair feeling where it had been shaved, “and you have such beautiful hair, why must you shave it all off?”

She still saw him as something beautiful; something to make beautiful by the feminine standards of modernity. It never occurred to her than her boy would become beautiful by becoming an actual man.

“Mom, there is still plenty of it, see,” he dangled it in front of her getting its dark brown and black fibers in her little face making her laugh and move away, “and look, the medical people said I am not a kid, that I am nineteen biologically, or metabolically, or whatever the fuck,” he said out of nervousness not disrespect, but his mom would frown and tell him not to speak that way.

She frowned and walked away to attend to the laundry as it buzzed.

He was trying to be a man, but he got words wrong sometimes and it embarrassed him and the medical people explained all that to him; his compensatory systems and need for social validation and blah blah. But really he was

just excited because in thirty days he was joining three other boys and heading to the mountains for good, well, for at least a year, and maybe more, they had said.

His parents had wanted to come, *but the medical people had insisted that the separating process needed to happen in the city and not on location; it was all very philosophic or scientific or whatever*, he thought. They had ideas for everything, according to them, the way you moved your feet or what color socks you wore all said something about who you were. He didn't buy all that, but he did know that he liked to wear all black, and yes, that included his socks. He didn't feel like it was some big deal; he liked what he liked.

Anyway, Jack thought, *I am ready for an adventure anyway, the school was, ok, it was fun most days, but, I am bursting out of this skin back here in the city; and these neighbors are fucking weird, anyway.* He looked out the window from their living room and saw the garish car in the drive. "Orange?" he asked himself. "Shit, maybe pumpkin spice," he yelled to his mom as she shuttled clothes back and forth and said, "what" as she passed him by on her way to his room.

"The neighbor's car, it's pumpkin spice I think," he said with contempt.

"You mean the color?" she yelled so she could keep walking toward his closet and still maintain the conversation.

"Yeah, and it's gay. And not the two-guys-fucking kind of gay, the other kind, the *bad* kind," he said and smiled at his words. He thought he was pretty cute.

"Jack, for crying out loud, can you please not speak that way?" she was standing in the hallway holding all his darks in a laundry basket, it looked like a black wedding cake the

way it trestled up from large black towel to small black under-shirt.

"Mom, I don't have an issue with gay people, but I do have an issue with gay colors, and that car is making me want to join Focus on the Family, the auto division," he smiled again. *I'm funny*, he thought. *That*, he said to himself, *was funny*, as he smiled open-mouthed and showed his teeth to the world; he had one crooked canine on the left that matched his lip that raised asymmetrically on that side.

"The auto da-what?" she said from the bedroom now.

"It's nothing, it's a joke, they have no auto division, I am sure. They would not agree, not countenance, as Tania would say, *not countenance such frivolity*," he was now speaking in a bad English tone. He liked Tania, she was pretty and smelled like cashews, *what else could a man want in a woman?* he asked himself.

"Mom, this guy was at the medical facility last time and he told a joke that I didn't get," Jack then said as it appeared in his mind unbidden.

"Ok, honey I'll be right there," she yelled as she tried to place each folded pile in its place.

Jack thought of the wording, making sure he got it right, repeating it in his head from memory the best he could. He had gotten a ninety-six percentile on the tests, so he was feeling pretty smart, although, all the boys he was meeting would have the same range according to Tania. *That guy was a bit scary*, he then thought, switching back to the joke-guy, and focusing more on his appearance now, and less on the joke he told.

"Ok, honey what did she say?" Jack's mom asked.

"Not *she*; *he*. This guy at the box last time was there; he was new, new to me anyway, and he told a joke I didn't

get,” Jack said as he turned from the window toward his mother.

“Ok, but I doubt I’ll get either, I don’t,” she began as she thought of socks.

“Mom, stop. Don’t be negative. Just assume the best; assume you will get it,” he said.

“I just don’t have that great a sense of,” she said as he interrupted loudly.

“Mom, yes, you do; you laugh at every joke I tell, provided they are not too prurient,” he said with another one of his odd accents that she could not place. He then said in his normal accent, “you just aren’t funny, no women are; but you get humor, you are a catcher not a receiver, a bottom, not a top,” he smiled with all his teeth; *the gay jokes were coming fluidly*, he thought. Then he felt a bit chagrined.

She didn’t get the reference to gay sex and so was not upset, but he felt a bit odd about it all.

“So, the guy says, *oh, the work*, the book, some novel, he says it, *is full of pathos and bathos*, and then he says as an aside you know,” Jack put his hand to his mouth as if speaking on the sly to his mom to illustrate what the guy did, “*and the other Musketeer was there too.* ”

They both stood there and furrowed brows and pursed lips and shrugged shoulder together as one.

And as she began to move organically Jack began doing whatever she did -aping her expressions- in an exaggerated fashion to annoy her and she didn’t even notice. So, all full of energy, he kissed her on the lips and said, “yaaaahooo!”

“Jack,” she said with exasperation, wiping her lips of his slobbery smooch, “I don’t get the joke either, I told you I wouldn’t. I’m, wait, are you even sure it was a joke?”

“Mom, I am certain, positive, 100% moth,” he was about to say, *motherfucking*, but did not. “I’m sure.”



## 22. Vector-8

We suggest that modern man's obsession with longevity, and with maintaining physical vigor and sexual attractiveness to an advanced age, is a symptom of unfulfillment resulting from deprivation with respect to the power process

Industrial Society and Its Future; [Washington Post; Anonymous editorial]

Among the abnormal conditions present in modern industrial society are excessive density of population, isolation of man from nature, excessive rapidity of social change and the breakdown of natural small-scale communities such as the extended family, the village or tribe

Technological Slavery [Kaczynski, Theodore]

Conservatives are fools: they whine about the decay of traditional values, yet they enthusiastically support technological progress and economic growth. Apparently, it never occurs to them that you can't make rapid, drastic changes in the technology and the economy of a society without causing rapid changes in all other aspects... such changes inevitably break down traditional values

*Ibid*

## **I. 1977 e.v.**

*He sank to the bottom of the pool. His arms folded, bubbles from the air trapped in his trunks & nose rose between him like stars as the top of the surface fluctuated like the edge of the bright blue universe.*

*His father was in black. At his eleven o'clock. Above, and outside the water of the family's rented house's pool.*

*He stared back. His arms -too- were folded. They stared at one another and neither breathed nor spoke.*

*Only the mother intervened.*

*He was three.*

*He won that battle. His father had to climb down to save him. But the father would never again humble himself to save his son.*

*Revenge would be had. And the reasons for it began with the boy's innate intransigence.*

*The father would make sure that was known.*

He dreamed as a babe in what images he recalled from today. The rain hit the home in notes musical to the ears and created goosepimples on his skin. One day he'd be told that a mother's and father's DNA fight for supremacy in the forming *zygote* . One day he'd learn step father's hurt stepchildren at a higher rate. One day he'd ask, *what if a man was born who would harm any son -not merely foreign but- not exactly identical to him?*

But today he slept and dreamt -in image and feeling; without language- of obstinance at the bottom of and above the watery part of his world.

## II. 2020 e.v.

“Look, you got a bunch of these white dudes that are analytics dudes. So, they’re number crunchers. Everything is according to P.E.R and all this other stuff; all these statistical categories. Well, what is happening is they are looking at that and they are using that to frame rosters. Because if you go to an owner and an owner that doesn’t particularly know basketball what’s their position? *I know numbers* . Well, if you’re an analytics dude you’re coming to them with numbers, so they’re *gonna* let you flow.

“That’s why Daryl Morey let go with Carmelo Anthony with ten games into the season. Because the analytics dudes judge the game in ten game numbers. After ten games they think it tells you something,” Stephen A. Smith said into the lab as the podcast played. Isaiah let it run as MO stacked it as mere blip of his total auditory intake for the 24.6 seconds the man spoke.

*God loves the black skin* , the shirt said on Raashaun Casey’s chest and back.

No one said one word about the shirt.

It was taken as obvious that a black man could asset such things. And Isaiah knew why: *the minority may assert his pride* . But Isaiah thought he knew what most black folk didn’t know: *whites in America were not white; they were manifold, and among them were minorities too* . And they would assert their pride as vociferously as African-Americans. Separatism was not a black phenomenon as McWhorter claimed; it was a trait in Appalachia and the mountain west too. Isaiah saw the genome beneath the skin tone; the denominator below the dividing line; the math before time. And all minorities hide in dark places when all one does is look at the light.

He thought of the way stars look in telescopes, and how one didn't really see a star. Isaiah saw Wilhelm Herschel and Caroline in the shops of *Bavaria* polishing those mirrors again. He took light readings from the area absorbed in *beryllium*, and even though MO had told him it was an illusion, he too thought he saw such stars. He let that diorama run like mechanical automatons -little hewers of wood, and drawers of water of history- on gears traveling around the big clock. They ran like machines in his machine-like mind and the mirrors went black with rubbed polish before wiped to an uncanny clear.

He made artifacts that weighed  $1.67 \times 10^{-27}$  kilograms again and set this mass of a neutron down inside his mind as if on an inner slab inside an inner lab; and he pulled apart the neutrinos that collide like bullet-catch magic trick before they hit, talking down a man committed to jump. He enlarged the small, he slowed down the fast, he made separate what was once one. He made a sky in his mind and then gazed back down toward the plants in his terrarium and his animals in his bestiary. He thought way out in the black vacuum of space.

He finally breathed one breath.

A paper from *Atilla J. Krasznahorkay et.al.*, ran behind his avatars like sheets of a stage play's curtain; red and gold and black lettered; folds and waves and folds:

*Nuclei are bound states of protons and neutrons. They can have excited states analogous to the excited states of atoms, which are bound states of nuclei and electrons. The particular nucleus of interest is beryllium-8, which has four neutrons and four protons, which you may know from the triple alpha process. There are three nuclear states to be aware of: the ground state; the 18.15 MeV excited state, and the 17.64 MeV excited state.*

*Most of the time the excited states fall apart into lithium-7 nucleus and a proton. But sometimes, these excited states decay into the beryllium-8 ground state by emitting a photon -gamma-ray-. Even more rarely, these states can decay to the ground state by emitting an electron-positron pair from a virtual photon: this is called internal pair creation and it is these events that exhibit an anomaly.*

*The Atomik group goes on to suggest that the new particle appear to fit the bill for a dark photon, a reasonably well-motivated copy of the ordinary photon that differs in its overall strength and having a non-zero mass. [quantumdiaries.org]*

Isaiah had read that paper 1.4 billion times and had re-run their NA48/2 experiments, and now his own. He hacked the experiment to make the dark-photon theory fit the *beryllium* anomaly and still be in line with the first experiments. He threw out the math and built the model in contravention of the rules. He ignored the mathematics; as it worked despite this; it was so commonplace now in this millionth virtual iteration that he even forgot that he had smiled the first eleven times it had worked.

For now his biological experiment was up next. *Ready and next*, he thought.

Now he ran the numbers -again- on the inner metabolic conditions, the biochemical algorithms, the allostatic fluctuations that ran inside the body of the man beset.

*The man against the world*, he thought.

*A man outnumbered feels differently than a man safe -made safe- by the herd. A man alone -or in a small tribe against a larger group- feels a grandeur, a nobility, a fuck-you attitude that overtakes men, Isaiah thought, of certain aspect. And men with certain genes remember everything. Even if they*

*don't remember it exactly correctly, they remember more - and more correctly- than anyone else. They seem a hundred percent right, even if only 67% accurate, because everyone else is so goddamn wrong. And these other men are wrong because they are forgetful, and they are forgetful because they don't feel things so extremely, and they don't feel things so extremely because they lack the genetics for prolonged dopamine on the dmPFC, lack the testosterone and epinephrine that occurs endogenously and effects stark emotions and memory recall, and they are a kind of -dead inside- luke warm, neither hot nor cold, and -as is best for an organism like a society- they are cozy inside a culture that has their back. "Feels like homeostatic," Isaiah said, "like body temp ."*

His was 99.9 degrees.

"And because most people lack empathy at the levels the alpha -and the sigma- have. Most people feel so little compared to great men," Isaiah said as he felt this *feeling* phenomenon was the catalyst for all that men laid at the feet of rationality and intelligence and will. *Great men just feel more* , he thought again, *all while the unfeeling mass accuse them of have less empathy than them* . It was an irony most would never accept. But the data was clear, the alpha chimp did more work, gave more away, broke up fights and stuck up for the underdog most often, placed his hands upon others to reassure and calm himself, and was always tending to the tribe. Always. And that was not due to rationality; but to feeling. Only alphas -and sigmas, as introverted as they were- truly gave a shit in the limbic system; and only they felt deeply of the world. And those feelings transmitted into actions, and entrenched memories; and -Isaiah now posited- a grasp for words to explain what it was they saw, heard, felt inside that stormy mind.

Language was -Isaiah thought- that tool of the feeling creature.

For IQ was 33% memory, the ability to recall; which was 91% an occupation of endocrine function hardwiring memories into the brain. Isaiah deconstructed both IQ and the alpha archetype in a sexually dimorphic species in .08 seconds and knew nobody would get it, because they didn't care and even if they did they'd not remember it.

*How much important shit from my discoveries would be forgotten?* he wondered as he saw the draw of black space; the vacuum pulling on him. He'd helped MO build CRISPR vectors for this and that genomic fix, but he knew he couldn't make all alphas, *with memories and IQs high, or all sigmas -Jesus, even worse - with even higher IQs and that deadly introversion combined . They had to remain rare: 12.5% alpha, 1% sigma.*

And just then he thought of the vector of the book. *The book as vector*, he thought. *It could infect everyone.*

"It could work," he said aloud as he moved on to his previous thoughts.

*Having tons of rebels inside a functioning organism is like having cancer inside a healthy body. A society, Isaiah concluded, of too many extreme people, men with extreme feelings, and extreme recall is not good for the society, the organism, the whole.*

He almost told himself to *remember that* but let his mouth twitch instead. He too would be dangerous the more and more he recalled.

He ran Japan's numbers. First came the asylum seekers by year:

2012: 2,545 applicants; 18 approved

2013: 3,260 applicants; 6 approved

2014: 5,000 applicants; 11 approved

2015: 7,686 applicants; 27 approved

2016: 10,901 applicants; 28 approved

2017: 19,628 applicants; 20 approved

In 2010 over 73,070 refugees from Africa and Asia and the Middle East were allowed into the US. 73,070 in the US compared to 18 -in 2012- for Japan.

He then let the immigration and naturalization numbers load.

The bulk of those called “immigrants” in *Japanese* statistics were actually *Japanese* -born *Koreans* . They counted in the official immigrant numbers and thus skewed the data. The concept of *minzoku* in Japan is that all three -race, ethnicity, and national identity- is one. Unlike the West which separates the three, and one can be a Black American of west Indian decent; or an Asian British Pakistani.

Unlike that, in Japan you are *Japanese* . The tolerances are much closer, and other races -only 1.8%- or ethnicities, are very rare. Even if born there, if you were *Korean* by blood, you had to ask permission to stay.

The *Japanese* Prime Minister *Tar ō As ō* was on record claiming that Japan was “one race, one civilization, one language and one culture.” Which was repeated by government and cultural leaders up and down the islands. *Shintaro Ishihara* -mayor of *Tokyo* - asserted *minzoku* in 2012 as well.

The *Japanese Nationality Act* of 1984 stated that citizenship is *jus sanguinis* , and thus tied to blood rather than place of birth. One must be *Japanese* already; in the blood. Isaiah smiled at the valence; for this was how the inmate saw himself -as a *bloodborne Scot* , was how he phrased it-regardless of his birth and rearing in the United States.



“Shackled to their English ships and phony polite ways,” the inmate had said when MO had drawn blood for this and that test. He had listed the ships like *the Pallas* , *the Friendship* , *the Black Joke* . He had given them data on each side of his family going back to 1715 as breezily as one says one’s middle name: *James* . He took his chains now as evidence, as part of the historical record of his bloodline. Isaiah was - for a moment too small to measure- amazed.

*The inmate, Isaiah thought, actually saw his incarceration as proof he was who he said he was. People are fucking weird,* Isaiah thought.

This was a thing most white Americans -after the 19<sup>th</sup> century and outside *Appalachia* - would never understand. But the African-American and Chicano understood; their identity too was in the blood. This was why the inmate - despite his brutal speech *vis-à-vis* the races beyond his own- was so respectful of the most hardcore black nationalists and revanchist Latinos. It’s why he respected the American Indians of AIM, and the *Mā ori* who refused to contain their fervor for war and madness: *those that knew who they were* , Isaiah recalled that the inmate often said it this way. He respected that they knew who they were *via jus sanguinis* , *via* blood in the veins, not in mere ideas, abstractions like ‘America’ in the brain.

*The water of the womb, trumps the blood of the covenant* , the inmate would sometimes say.

Isaiah knew too now why the inmate -although trying to hide his belief in God- had thus disguised that he actually was no Christian. Christianity was the idea that anyone could join; the motto was that, *the blood of the covenant was thicker than the water of the womb* . Isaiah knew that to run the experiment right -his experiment- that he’d need to make sure Blax was more open to the opposing view: the idea that ideas could supersede race; that creed could

surpass bloodline; that cool rationality could trump hot feelings all of the time. But he couldn't dictate that to Blax; the boy, the man, would have to figure it out on his own.

The **a/ax** model had shown Isaiah that.

In America -a nation of 327.1 million- over 1.18 million people were allowed in annually from all manner of countries, races, ethnicities and religions.

In 2015 Japan -a land of 126.8 million people- only 9,469 applications for citizen were approved; 78% were *Japanese* -born Koreans. If you eliminate -from the *stats* - the *Japanese* born *Koreans* , Japan only allowed 2,560 non-Asian immigrants -not born in Japan- into their country in 2015. That's .007% the amount the US allowed into its country.

And that was without including illegals, which the US had 21.4 million and Japan had less than forty-four thousand that Isaiah could determine.

He thought of epidemiology, and sociology and natural background rates of *ennui* and alienation. He thought of just who the English had imported first to the colonies, *not the Africans but the Scots, and that was why the civil war was inevitable*, he thought. *Everyone blamed it on the slavery of the blacks and browns, but it was the Scots first imported as slaves by the English in 1642 and again in 1715, 1745 and by 1861 it was the Scots -not the Africans- that didn't fit into America and thus rebelled. It was the Scots who'd ran the south; and vowed revenge; and cleaved by oath and then force of arms.*

*Which is why, he thought, you don't want a huge contingent of minorities in your society, because your natural background rate of outlaws will be between 1-5% in any population -any race- but if you import millions more each year who would have been majorities in their native habitat, and force them into an oppositional role, you've just given*

*them something to alienate them, and given yourself -the society- an additional 10-30% of raw outlaws; that's a threshold for a cancer. Homogenous societies don't have these problems, Isaiah thought. And in self-similar societies those individuals of any mainstream can relax. Each race, religion, creed, would always feel safer amongst their own. Allostatic roil would calm.*

*Their inner seas would be like glass.*

He vaguely saw a few sailors, mariners, whalers, pirates on each landed shore look across even placid seas. But he tabled that for now. The beryllium-8 laced particles and dark-photons invaded his modeling running in background - flickering back and forth like *Grecian* goblet and two faces east and west, dark and light gave the observer or the observed to the eyes- and he pushed them down so he could think on larger things like genes, and morphology of biological instantiations of the math he saw assemble and deconstruct like ants in a mound, a hill. *Sometimes the math went still*, he thought.

He let himself stare at the avatar he'd built of the earth's core; the data he'd gathered from drilling there. He then closed his eyes and mind to it for now. It was too far away to worry whilst he had so much to do. *One cannot think of step 7 while on step 1 of 6*, he thought.

"But," Isaiah said, "the black man in America must be keen, the black sheep must be *en garde*, the man who plays blackjack must learn to count each card." He said this with a cadence matching as he flipped through his dark deck of just forty-six. Bronze filigree appeared on the back side as he tumbled them in a bridge-shuffle, and one card spit out and onto the ground.

"Look man," Stephen A. Smith continued on the AV file that ran in the lab, "I got left back in the fourth grade and I had a first-grade reading level. And from that point forward,

remembering -I mean it was fourth grade, man- I have to tell you right now I'm fifty-one years old -this is over forty years ago- and the kids in the neighborhood that were laughing at me and ridiculing me; I remember everybody. Everybody's names: Marshall Lewis, Donald Miller, Willie Jones, I mean everybody, man. I was never *gonna* let anyone laugh at me for my lack of intelligence."

Isaiah smiled. For Stephen A. was right. He had the memory of a Scot, of a *Fulani* , of a *Yoruba* , as he -in fact- was. And of course he'd remember all their names.

Isaiah left the card upon the ground. It was day 6 of Isaiah's life, and tomorrow -his second shot- his **b/lax** would be born.

### III. 2028 e.v.

*Raffi's* father -inmate 20989147- was locked up when *Raffi* was nine. *Raffi's* father -*Deshuan* Jackson- was released nine years later, and for *Raffi's* eighteenth birthday -today- they went and picked their father up at ADX. He was one of the first dozen inmates under the PraXis protocol to be released with repaired genes that -PraXis claimed- coded for criminality.

*Raffi* was quiet and watched his father. He seemed smaller to *Raffi* , and his demeanor was that of a man still asleep.

He watched as his mother drove and his father seemed to lean against the window, even his shoulders seemed all the way to the right. *Raffi* worried the door would open and his father would fall out. Then he worried it wouldn't and they'd have to deal with this man in the house.

He carried a knife in his boots. The wear on them from his pants had bothered him but the knife pressed on his ankle bone and so he forgot all about the scuffs. He touched it now to feel the metal and make sure it hadn't fallen out. He

wasn't supposed to bring it; his mama had said not to. But he did anyway; he just switched it to the other boot, and to the inside, and she didn't notice when they all lined up -him and his three brothers and sister- before they left for Florence. It was a three-hour drive from Aurora, Colorado, and *Raffi* would think a lot on the way back; think in language new to him. He didn't remember thinking much at all on the trip up.

But he remembered that there were men in the house since he was a boy. He thought of this and didn't feel a thing as a *bot* entered his neck at the dorsal horn. No, all he thought now was that he knew that those men were not his father, and *Raffi* now figured his father knew it too.

## 23. Romans 131

Low external-input technology [LEIT] is often described as both labour (sic) and information intensive... Robert Shapiro, the former Monsanto chief executive, once offered a rather blunt description of biotechnology as representing a trend in agricultural history in which 'information' was replacing 'stuff'.

Self-Sufficient Agriculture [Tripp, Robert]

They who have waged war in obedience to the divine command, or in conformity with His laws, have represented in their persons the public justice or the wisdom of government, and in this capacity have put to death wicked men; such persons have by no means violated the commandment, "thou shalt not kill."

City of God [Saint Augustine]

The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history

apocryphal [Blair, Eric]

### **I. 2035 e.v.**

The airport was hot from the concrete's thermal gain and from the goddamn sun above; and the jump-rigs were heavy. It was 1131hrs and the starlight eight-minutes away was approaching its apex.

The Beechcraft King Air B90 twin engine jet-prop plane was humming and buzzing on the strip and it made warm wind on the Jacks as their instructor knelt before the door so they could step on him like a stool. It was bench seating down the *fuselage* and they had bought out the plane for the day; taking only six spots of the fifteen: it was Blax -who was already AFF certified decades before- and each Jack and finally one instructor for them all. They had made three jumps each that day and were on their own now with only an instructor to monitor them as they flew. They had scheduled eight jumps of the required sixteen; and Blax had paid \$21,400 in cash.

The pane was white and purple at the nose and looked like it had been dipped and stood up to let dry; the nose was narrow like a tiger shark; the noise of the props was at a volume and frequency felt in the neck.

The terminal had cleared out; no civilians as even the small Cessna -the school's second plane- had been out for days with engine problems. The other hangers had private planes and no activity; the adjacent roads had a few cars far off in the distance. The office staff was down to two girls.

The plane's pilot ramped up the RPMs and the airframe began to hop up and down on its rubber tires.

Blax sat in the back and checked his altimeter as they rose from 5,280 to 18,110 feet in eight minutes under the influence of the eleven-hundred horsepower engines; he had to keep swallowing quickly to clear the ears. He stared at the back of Jack Three's head.

Jack One had taken the exit seat; the door was wide and tall like a garage-folder and as they hit 17,500 feet he checked his reserve handle and squeezed it in his right hand with the left laid over top like a shell. His release bar -U-shaped and chrome- he hooked a right thumb around and -with his left- grabbed his own right hand as they had been trained.

The plane climbed in the air and hit jump altitude.

And as the plane leveled out they all slid on the benches toward the door. Jacks One through Four were staggered with the instructor between them and Blax in last position. Jack One raised the panel door and stood in the jamb; he kept his head up and eyes on the prop; his feet staged heel to toe. His hands clasped the jamb -one hand out, one in- as if holding the boards to a book together so the leaves wouldn't tumble out.

His eyes watered as he didn't have a great seal on his goggles; the instructor spoke loudly to one of the other

Jacks and the wind and prop rushed and droned in his other -his left- ear. He couldn't understand what he was saying so his focused on his exit; he rose up and stuck his head out the door and his shoulders square with the plane; he counted to just one with a lift from the heel and then dipped and fell from the door.

He spun and tumbled head down and the stomach stretched like a bungee from the plane until he leveled out at 12,010 feet from the ground and just over a thousand feet from the plane which was now heading south and away dropping more of the Jacks from it as if it was coming slightly apart. Jack One pushed his pelvis down like a badminton shuttlecock, he relaxed his arms and legs in slight bends; he had been told to smile in training -with an instructor on each side the last jump- but he had no interest in smiling now. He kept the head up and focused on one of the white peaks of the Rockies out on the horizon and tilted his left arm down to stop his rotation; returning to that spot he'd picked out.

It all looked like a clock to him, the peak he picked a noon; himself the bold and steady hour hand of the analog watch and the furry and ragged skin of the world wrapped around some wrist of the core. *Other men*, he thought, *were the slow-moving minutes that could never commit and women would be the second-hand in a thin and seamless spin.* It did not bother him that he'd never known a woman; he saw no contradiction in this; no more than that he didn't know all men and yet called them facile and unreliable as he balanced the hurtling body through Colorado's high elevation wind.

He fell to earth on a heading perfectly held. The snowy peak of a fourteener did not budge in his view.

His shins felt cold and his neck ached a bit, but his eyes had dried and now he checked his altimeter; he was at 10,880 feet.



Jack Three and Four had left next; Jack Four jumping out as if diving into a pool. This reckless egress pissed the instructor off as he moved toward the door and looked down from the noisy aperture in the fuselage then hurriedly jumped next.

Jack Two left the plane second to last and saw the three Jacks below him like spinning leaves of burned black. His smile was large and as he raised the head and eyes he could see snow on the mountains; it was quiet in his ears as the plane was now above and away and it was just him and the 150mph wind. Jack Two dropped his head again and saw that the instructor had caught up to Jack Three and One and was close to them in elevation and orientation. Jack saw thumbs up signals and then the instructor spin away and slow himself down slightly by shaping himself into a less aerodynamic shape.

Jack gained on him.

Jack Four was head down and passing them all like a bullet fired; like a disheartened and dejected dart. Jack Two could see him by the bottoms of his boots; and the fists made at his side. Jack Two smiled even bigger and laughed because he knew Jack was going to piss everyone off by opening as low as he could before the AAD would sense his speed - faster than 25mph- and altitude -set to 1,700 feet- and open all on its own. They were supposed to open at 5,000 -4,500 at the lowest- but Jack Four was going to wait until 2,000 feet and Jack Two knew it. The low open wasn't the most dangerous part it was that he'd open his main chute so close to the automatic reserve that the AAD system would open the second canopy even after Jack had pulled his main. This had killed experienced diver Adrian Nicholas and so Jack was doing it so they'd turn not just his AAD system off; but everyone's. *He -Jack Two thought of Jack Four- was always trying to prove his case in the most reckless way ;*

and once he had told Jack Two he did this, *because nobody listened to reason, facts and figures didn't change shit.*

*People needed a scare thrown into them.*

Jack Two thought of all this as he oriented to Gray's Peak just as he'd been told to do. He loved the air and the sky around it; it was like a clear fluid to him and he thought of it like the way he loved water and a lake or ocean, as two separate things. He had been told if clouds came in they'd have to call off the jumps. So he looked to see if he could spot any white in his blue sky. He took in the ground's browns and edifices strewn like stars in the sky. He made constellations of outbuildings and homes and nebulae of industrial parks by the roads. He checked his altimeter and he was down to 7,705 feet.

He checked Gray's again and traced the treeline, the white snowcap, the way it ran north and south. He thought of each ram and each elk in the forest as if they too thought of him. His own body disappeared as his heading slightly spun retrograde and the range's long ragged line opened up to the south.

He knew Blax was behind him like an old mother hen and that the plane was heading to the ground.

Jack Two kept thinking of their upcoming jobs and wondered if they'd have to skydive into somewhere half way across the world. He wondered if it would be over land or ocean, day or night, he wondered if he'd be any good at packing chutes and he lamented that he hated tangled lines. His mind grabbed lines in these visions; each one like hair of a woman's. He then saw the lines turn black and the hanger fall away and a dark room appear and he drug his fingers through her strands; separating them one by one. He imagined her hair and her head back, her neck and ear. It was no longer a woman, an abstraction, but it was her -all at once- in his mind's hands.

The air had no smell at this speed; he checked his gear and he had just hit 186mph.

He let the chatter inside the head of each Jack sooth him like windchimes or rain on the side of their containers at home. He heard them think of the danger, the technique to balance -it was not intuitive to them or their bodies to relax correctly to float- and he heard reminders to keep the head up and eyes out. These inner *comms* were like instincts at first, they had not yet gotten used to thinking alongside one another in their own heads. It was analog not digital and it came on like an acquired talent or like an acid trip.

The epinephrine and increased androgens and the pressure on the chest and armpits made him feel drunk, the thoughts of the pull made him feel eager to check his wrist again. He often thought in series of steps: *first this, then this, then that*.

"Sixty-six hundred," he said aloud as he had been trained to do when he first came out of the slide. It was late -as he was over four thousand feet from the slide- but he often did the right thing at the wrong time. His head heard Jack One say *forty-five-fifty* and then Jack saw the arms of Jack One wave off below him. The chute of Jack One bloomed like an explosion of blue and grey, the ribs like a shell, the shape now big and square; Jack two pushed right with his starboard arm and chest and began to move away from directly overhead of Jack. He had been reading Dicken's on the plane and left the little red book on the bench.

He thought of it there and saw a plane land from the east and heard Tania in his head say that she too had had a feeling about *Madam DeFarge* the whole time.

He thought of the red yarn in her hands, the hats she made for the *Jacques*, and he reflexively reached back with the right arm and hand toward his aft and felt for the ball of his pilot chute. He checked his altimeter and even though he

was at 5,200 he waved off and returned the hand to the ball and pulled. "*Those without natural affection* ," he said as the words fluttered up and away trailing the small chute. The tension between the covenant and the blood articulated in one line of code running in his brain -having unknown results, unknown to him- would begin to chain neurons to one another just as previous lines of code -from other books, other vectors- had begun all those years ago. It was just one line that rose to the surface idiopathically as the pilot chute caught the wind, plumed, bloomed, and pulled the main chute all at once.

He felt the rise of the chest and the head and he looked up as he was stood straight up; the brakes were fully hit on his decent.

The canopy snapped and rumbled and opened like a wadded paper ball unfurled; the harness pulled at the groin and the shoulders as the lines uncoiled like stingers of jellies in the sea around *Timaru* . He was about a mile above the airport and he knew it would be hot again once he landed. He looked down at his feet dangling in air and the saw Jack Four's shoot finally open just 1,909 feet from the ground.

He adjusted his leg straps so he could sit like in a swing.

His coder flickered and he saw images of *Grecian* ships in the Black Sea 1.2 miles down from the surface of the water; well below the anoxic layer of 600-feet. The seafloor was smooth and tan and the merchant ship's sails had fallen and swaddled the hull like a gathered-up scarf; the masts were upright, the gunwales crenulated next to an outrigger boat. It was from 505 BC and it was preserved in the zero-oxygen bottom. The Black Sea was 91.4% absent of O<sup>2</sup> .

*Death to all things that moved gave life to the still* , Jack thought.

He saw the climate data from 12,000 years before, as the earth warmed back then and the lake took on salt water from the Mediterranean over the rocks of the *Bosphorus* Straights. There were forty other ships at bottom, all preserved, all lit-up by the *bots'* lights. Each ship 75-feet long, each length of Caucasian rope was dusty but preserved in a coil like a long frozen reticulated python waiting out a sandstorm for centuries of unspoken malice and grit; eager to hang a man from *Yggdrasil* or *à la lanterne* .

As he imagined the rope his left eye caught a dark shape glint around the edges as the sun framed it for a time too short to measure.

He saw Blax pass him to his left -a black spot like a large bird- between the front range to the west and his own eyes. It was quiet all at once and he grabbed his steering-toggles and pulled hard down on the right and spun a half turn then released it and straightened out.

## **II. 2038 e.v.**

*"In June of 1999 I was twenty-five years old and had just arrived at the airport in Ashville, North Carolina with one pair of black BDUs, a white -but dirty- wife-beater on and a pair of cow-hide gloves in my back pocket. I had had ten dollars but had already spent it on a candy bar and coffee. I hadn't had chocolate in nine months. I did however have a credit card and I used it to buy a ticket at the counter:*

*'What is the cheapest flight to any of these three places: Denver, Cincinnati or Sarasota, Florida,' I had asked. She was mostly bemused -possibly contemptuous- but worked away at her computer and said, 'you can go to Cincinnati for a hundred sixty-nine dollars. One way.'*

*"I got on that plane ninety minutes later looking like I had just got off a farm. Because I had. Earlier that morning my friend Chen had asked me to leave Zendik Farm and when they asked, you said yes. It didn't matter that they tricked you out of your car and all your stuff and dumped you on the side of the road. It didn't matter they ruined you and felt nothing about it at all.*

*"When I arrived in Ohio I felt like the whole world was mine to explore and exploit; I had no conscience; the kind of liberty you feel when on vacation I suspect. Only, I was on a vacation from the larger human family. I felt no affinity for anyone; and, I reassured myself, I would only care again for people once I returned to Zendik. I knew I had to get whatever it was that had kept me from being present and aware and committed to Zendik out of my system; and out here in the world was the place to do it. I would use the world like a simulation program I thought; a game, practice. Then, when I was ready, I could return to the Farm and begin real life once again.*

*"I genuinely thought Chen, Verdy, Shey, Bugzy, were my friends. I had no idea they saw me as nothing more than a tool, a thing to use, a mountain to strip mine. I was naïve. But in my heart I loved them and even though they still feel nothing for me, I love them today.*

*"I would never see Zendik Farm again; and I'm not sure my conscience ever came back to me. I felt things that could be described as guilt and moral terror certainly; I even began to adhere even more strongly to Zendik's avowed values more assiduously than I ever had while on the farm herself. Values like radical honesty and self-awareness; radical ownership over my problems, that is to say, taking responsibility for everything in my life no matter how much I may have been victimized by someone or battered about by forces larger than myself.*

*"It's been almost forty years since I left and I'm never going back; nobody is. Zendik is dead and the dream it spawned in many of its leaders and followers alike is like a griffin of somnambulisms; the eyes and ears of mere dreams; the internal feedback mechanisms that don't quite match up. The patient isn't paralyzed; he's moving in the world, but his brain is still hypnopompic and thus dreaming up a rationale for the phenomena his body is experiencing in that real world: His reach in his dreams is for a noble sword, his grasp in real life is the mere handle of his chamber door. He believes -quixotically- he's on an honorable steed, not an emaciated Rocinante.*

*"Maybe everyone else is awake and navigating just fine or maybe the rest of the world is asleep and their irrational dreaming has no impact on their inert body; but either way, we ex-Zendiks are the only ones half in and half out of the world. And we know it and anyone who meets us knows it too. We'll probably treat you like you're asleep and paralyzed while we move about; and you'll probably treat us like we're sleep walking and as if you're totally awake and lucid. And there is no way to tell which version is true. But we do doubt; and yet aren't you all so goddamn certain?"*

*It's at this point that the man I'm interviewing at ADX pauses and purses his lips in a humble way; a rare moment of such a thing for him. I don't think this reporter has met a more arrogant man. But what he's said to me has begun to sink in and I see he actually does have a kind of innate humility even if during the few hours I've known him he's displayed a braggadocio and aloofness that I might normally find distasteful.*

*I've come here to interview a man about a killing -a series of killings- that had Denver in strange state in 2018 and 2019. Most media have focused on how these*

*46 murders were accomplished in under six months by just one man; a man who had ostensibly gotten away with it until the one man -a medical doctor, a scientists, an entrepreneur, but a man with no political experience- a man who was candidate for Governor of Colorado was contacted by the killer who had offered to turn himself in if that man was in fact elected.*

*But I've come to ask why; not how.*

*While here I've found myself finding something else entirely. Maybe if you can follow his strained analogy you could say I'm either awake and writing these words on my desktop or I'm asleep thinking I am while my real hands in the real world are maybe tying my shoes ("or strangling a man," as Mr. MacLeod mentioned when I gave him this rough draft). Maybe he's the noble sword I've found in my permanent restful state; and maybe there's some mere door handle in my restive -but real-life that I'm fumbling with instead. But, Lyndon James MacLeod feels real to me and so I'm going to pretend that I don't doubt in him or myself... at least for a little while longer. - K. Marshall October, 2038*

He'd finished reading the article, *A Noble Sword; the story of Killing and Being Killed 1,000 times*, by the Denver Post's Kyle Marshall, and then held the magazine supplemental in front of him; balanced on his thighs. He looked up and around and paused his eyes briefly on each person -next to and around him- on the light-rail car. The city came into focus quickly as the lights to the car turned off and the large windows of the train filled with the lit-up *ciudad*. They crossed over *Kalamath* and turned under the Wells Fargo building on Speer. Cars drove past them on the parallel roadway under the huge building and they all came out onto 15th street. The lights flicked back on inside the train and the city disappeared behind the black glass.



The reflections of all the people looked like *spectres* ; his own face no more or less clear or opaque.

He smiled a little when a man caught his gaze; and felt himself smile more inside. *What a strange, very strange man*, he thought of the man in the article. *And wasn't man himself, mankind that is, wasn't mankind stranger still? A stranger to himself too* , he thought adding the double meaning to the ruminations that lattice-worked the garden in his wet head.

He immediately opened the magazine again and snapped back the pages to find the first sheet of the article. He felt he had to know when this had happened. It felt ancient to him. The article was written last week, but, he read it the line again:

“...in 2018, Michael Swinyard had walked into the house at 90 S. Bryant St in the working-class neighborhood of Valverde and never walked out again.”

*Nineteen years ago* , he thought and tapped his feet and moved his mouth side to side like a pendulum. And the article was well written, *but that sentence was a bit boilerplate*, he thought. *Ah, it happens to everyone. We can't anguish over each word, each line, in a manuscript. At least journalists can't; they're on a deadline. And it's not like anyone is going to notice anyway.*

“Fuck it,” he said aloud finally; lowly but without shame or concealment.

He tossed the periodical onto the seat next to him and breathed in deeply; then yawned anyway. He kept his eyes closed after the yawn and leaned back resting his head on the glass. The train seemed now to glide along the Denver streets; he imagined himself a mere neuron in a red blood cell inside the vascular system of the city, shuttling toward the brain of the organism to deliver oxygen and pick up

carbon dioxide; the people outside were other neurons in other cells doing their jobs for themselves and the greater good of the city. He imagined the argument between Richard Dawkins and EO Wilson over group selection or *inclusive fitness* as it was now called.

*It was true, he thought, that all reproduction happened at the level of the gene and so strictly speaking individual organisms did not reproduce with fidelity. And so, yes, while DNA built animals and people, and the better the animal DNA built -better for reproduction- the more likely it was the DNA itself would be passed along, there was still this strange phenomenon of Wilson's math.* He could see in his mind's eye now, the godfather of sociobiology speaking, and this wise old southern ant-man was saying with confidence: *the math works; and these guys have to explain it.*

*These guys,* was Dawkins and the other biologists who just refused to take group selection seriously. *Goddamn, I wish I understood the math myself* , he thought. *I feel like I've come to a part in the story where it switches from English to Esperanza or something* , he thought as his discursive views led from each neuron of assumption to another. His own genome report -thanks to his coder- now flashed in front of him; all those CGATs strung together like *hi-fidelity* cable through his body; carrying blueprints for structures springing up like bank building and courthouses and towers of apartments and homes.

He breathed loudly again and reset his mind. *Group selection* , he said to himself. *Think of this*, he went on, *think of DNA building an organ, an eye or a heart, for example* . That DNA could build any manner of organ, a blue eye; a 4-valve heart; an eye with an astigmatism; a heart with a hole in it. But the DNA would only be passed on to the next instantiation -the next organism- if that organ was useful enough to the larger, entire organism itself: the boar, the

bear, the bastard man himself. If the organ was useful enough to get the whole organism to a point in which he could reproduce, then that gene would be passed on.

He watched the city glide by; he heard mere mumbles from the passengers.

*So, no matter how great the DNA that built the feet or the head or the genitals, if the DNA that built the heart was no good, nobody, none of those CGATs in all those other chromosomes would be passed on and reproduced, recapitulated into the next organism . The whole beast had to work; work well enough, he thought.*

*And was not, he asked himself, each man a city unto himself? The brain and CNS was the mayor's office, each module of the brain, each pattern of thought -the rational, the emotional, the linear, the creative, the impulsive, the long-term, the concrete, the abstract, and on and on- each pattern of thinking correlating to a kind of personality in the building on Bannock street.*

*The eyes had their corollary in the media, everything the organism sees like the cameras of cable TV; each rod and cone of the eye like each camera crew in each bureau of each local affiliate; each neuron transmitting one piece of radiation wave along the visible spectrum; the ears like radio stations transmitting and receiving the merely audible spectrum of those same waves . He moved on to the extremities in his analogy.*

*The hands are what grasp, the heart is what circulates, the mitochondrial organelles give each cell energy, like the money needed to keep each man -each cell- alive . What circulates each man? he asked himself: the train, the bus, the car; all of these run through the circulatory streets, the arterial lanes of i25 and i70; the vascular branches of *Speer* and *Alameda* , the branching and winnowing capillaries of*

neighborhood streets like his own along *Zuni* or like 118th *mews* -which was French for *alleyway* - when he had lived up north.

*But what pumps it?* he asked himself as the light- rail windows went black and clear, occluding then revealing the sidewalks and shops and lights of apartments climbing above. *The public transportation obviously had a hub, the infrastructure like a heart, but what pumped the individual cars?* he asked as he groped for the analog. *Maybe they could correlate to the new respiocytes -the new fancy ones- he had read about :* self-propelled red-blood cell computers that raced through the body's circulatory corridors; they didn't need a heart.

He imagined how that would be.

*The city , he realized, had prefigured the next advancement in human evolution; a kind of leap forward then reverb back; like a DNA creating a man who has traits the genome doesn't yet have; a city showing signs of advancement in autonomy the body of man must catch up to.*

*But what would that be? What trait did a man have that mere DNA did not?* His brain spasmed as the confusion roiled and boiled from module to module. *Ah confusion !* he thought, *the heart of growth and health and next level shit. To be confused was exactly what kept the brain healthy and plastic and hungry for growth .* Scientific studies showed that being confused whilst working out a problem did in fact keep the brain healthy like doing pushups kept the body strong. It was a common trait among older adults who staved off dementia and Alzheimer's: learning new things.

It seemed, more and more, although he didn't know this, that that very confusion was handled in the right hemisphere, and this was why confusion, the embrace of chaos, was needed, for it exercised the right side of the

brain, the left side of the man. *The left-hand path* ... he had heard that phrase somewhere and it came up from his coder as he muted it so he could think.

*But we have no tolerance for confusion*, he thought, *as a species and especially as consumers of art and media.*

*Everything must make sense very quickly or the average person will turn the channel out of an ironic boredom . Imagine that, being confused -not knowing what the hell is going on- leads to boredom in so many people . It's so odd ,* he thought. *They don't even know what's good for them. But that's the least of their worries, they don't know sitting on their asses and eating Cheetos is killing them either. This city ,* he thought of Denver, *has lower obesity than the national average though, so this city is like a fit person with less insulin fat receptor genes; a fit city with fit people, like a fit body with fit cells.*

Next, the obvious correlates between the waste disposal systems like sewers of a city and the lower GI of a man; the perspiration function correlated to the evaporation off city lakes, cooling each system; the mouth consuming raw materials to distribute through the body to turn into useable products like ATP, or glucose for energy clearly mapped onto the various hubs of incoming raw goods like DIA -the airport- and UPS docks in Commerce City. *Ah*, he thought of the all the dope that came in to a city, *and our brains contain analogs to all manner of stimulants and narcotics, and these chemicals are produced in the brain from just such raw materials; which neurons ,* he wondered, *produced such endogenous opioids?*

He smirked as he saw guys on the corner of 20<sup>th</sup> and Welton dealing heroin. *Brazenly* , he thought as he watched as civilians gave wide berth sometimes but sometimes not.

His mind filled with information in response: beta-endorphins and gamma-endorphins were coded for by the POMC -*pro-opiomelanocortin* - gene in humans. These genes produced a nucleotide sequence that produced these chemicals in the brain in reward for certain behaviors. And there were many, many more: *dynorphins* and *enkephalins* and on and on. All designed by evolution bit by bit over millions of years in the lower mammals and in ourselves. Like scientists who reward caged animals with food or cocaine for certain behaviors, our own CNS giving out treats for behavior that lead to increased fitness in our ancestral environs.

*What were these traits and behaviors?* he wondered; closing the eyes.

And as the train rattled to a slow, then a stop, he opened his eyes and breathed again loudly to clear his mind. He stared longer at each person on the train and lingered on their faces. He felt as if he had investigated not just himself and the city but each of these neurons; each of these people too. He felt close to them, briefly, as the train's doors opened, and they began to shuffle out. *The lights of the city were stochastically distributed, built from that strange distribution we see fashioned patterns, like constellations, that build beasts and heroes and objects common in the sky above and on the ground below*, he thought, *patterns from random points of data*. The shops around the train-stop had strung up white lights in rows and he saw now little animals -reindeer and doves- crafted from LEDs in the trees and in the windows, analogs themselves of the constellations.

*The Hellenization of Rome* , he thought, *apropos* of nothing in particular.

*The emphasis* , he thought now, *on art and music and philosophy over the more martial constructs of the early city-states of the progeny of Romulus and Remus; how had*

*that struggle looked at the time; in the trenches; in each man and woman; in each child? Why, he asked, had he just been distracted by that random thought?* He scanned the city street as he exited the train and saw the *Gemini* constellation recreation in the window of the Death-Wish-Coffee shop. He sniffed out a small laugh and a pursed lipped smile. *This coder was funny ; he thought. It's more discursive than my normal brain ; well, it is my normal brain, but it really accelerates its normal style . Whatever you were before the implant you are that times a thousand it seems,* he thought.

Although, the coder was on *freestyle* mode; he could toggle off of it and put it in any number of other modes. He had ways of quieting the voices.

He saw the Red and Blue lights from the corner of his eye down Downing street where it lay across 30<sup>th</sup> . *The police ,* he thought and then he re-started his analogy of the city to the man.

*And what Governor did we have in our heads? What was it that Freud called the super-ego? What parts of our CNS were correlates to our city's liaison to the FBI? And why had I dreamed of that FBI liaison last night? And just why had I gotten the name correct;* as he found out this morning when he ran the dream-man through his coder and found out that Adam Vaperre was in fact the SAC for Denver's liaison to the Bureau.

He walked toward the flashing lights on the southwest side of Downing and toward 30<sup>th</sup> . His home loft was off 31<sup>st</sup> across from Bella Calla; *what strange floral constructions those girls made ,* he thought, as he crossed over Downing and on a vector toward Marion Street. They -the bloom arrangements- looked like a cross between the Garden of Eden and *Noserferatu* : a Vampiric but deathless growth. He liked them, but he didn't quite know why.

He heard the sounds of the *Hu* in his mind; the coder must have picked it he thought. Steppe songs of *Kahn* on string and gourd. Then he hears a police horse neigh. It made him shiver, clench and grimace at first; he then release the frown when he realized what it was.

He returned to his inner vision of the arrangements and saw their sanguinary flowers and gnarled and brambled sticks and *aubergine* and desert-stung hues of black as sharp as scorpion tangs and highland cattle; flora and mycorrhiza from them populated his concrete and steel loft like landmarks of some once civilized but now feral *Mexica* ruin that he could imagine an austere drug syndicate airport was built on top of. *Useful, utilitarian but temporary like a coral reef in seas with dropping pH*, he thought as he ruminated on what he did for a living. He had built quite the racket, laundering money for the syndicate using cryptocurrencies and forex trading.

*Ocean acidity was really just reduced alkalinity but whatever you called it, it was killing the reef . The Ocean's death seemed so far away from up here at 5280*, he thought, but he knew that was not really true. He felt the slim external-drive in his front pocket; the one with all his accounts on it. But, he also kept one one-hundred dollar bill on him, folded in the passport. He touched his inside pocket to feel it as if casually.

"God, what is true?" he said with a burst of air like flood over the mere words.

The cops were now to his six -*dealing with whatever stupid shit* - and he began to think again on what part of the brain would those public servants *par excellence* correlate to; *ah, the genes that coded for neurotransmitter uptake and blocking . The genes responsible for serotonin production; the Great Inhibitor .* He liked that. *Cops were the Great Inhibitory chemicals of the city, yes .*



The short-branch allele that exists in only 13-16% of people that doesn't produce enough serotonin to inhibit aggressive, anti-social, violent behavior is like a city with low police presence or long -or no- call response. But crime is down *writ large* in most cities, his coder immediately showed the bar graphs as he thought of crime. He tapped into the cloud *via* his PGC and found out that humans had more inhibitory neurons than any species; 25% of the total were designed to *stop* man from acting. It was similar to the budget for law enforcement. He blinked at the fractals of life that appeared when you paid attention.

And he just then thought of Governor Sou, when he -the Governor- first began talking about taking a new approach to crime and criminality. An audio recording of the man from a campaign event in 2018 auto-played over his coder as he walked up Marion.

*"We have, as a society, been addressing crime as ineffectually and atavistically as 18th century doctors treated infections and disease.*

*"That is to say, we've been treating symptoms and without any cognizance of the root cause. The medical professional of three hundred years ago had no germ theory of disease. They knew nothing of the microscopic prokaryotes that were assaulting and inhabiting the body's normal cells. We know now, that a virus or bacteria will invade a healthy human cell, or the cell of your family pet, and enter it, hijack its normal homeostatic functioning and then move on and infect other cells until the host, the patient, is sick and dying. The body will produce as best a defense as it can but if it fails; the host will weaken and die.*

*"In the brain -and to some extent the body- of a sociopathic or anti-social individual there are material, that is to say genomic, structural and bio-chemical*

*phenomena that produce feelings and patterns of thinking that produce an elevated risk of anti-social and pathological behaviors. In Charles Witman, the very famous case of the man who killed his wife and mother and then climbed to the top of the University of Texas bell tower and began shooting strangers, we have a case of the patient suspecting he had a problem in his brain - he left a note asking the authorities to look at it post-mortem- and then -now- we have the medical evidence of a tumor in his brain.*

*“This was, of course, confirmed by the autopsy of the man. Now, we have ourselves here in a moment in history where we can just keep banging away at the issue with a mastodon femur bone in the furry inept hand of a chimpanzee or we can actually see crime and criminality as a health issue and do something as radical as when we invented anti-biotics. But look, the germ theory of disease was first postulated in the mid 1500’s. However, it took centuries for it to even take hold as an idea; there was competition for example by the Miasma theory, or bad air theory, that held until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

*“But then through fits and starts it took Western science until really the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to even try antibiotics, one of the first invented by Paul Ehrlich in 1907 or 1908, I believe, and that was arsphenamine, although it was called something else back then; Salvarsan or something. But really these drugs didn’t begin to be developed and be used until the 1940s when thyrothricin was derived by Rene Dubos if I’m not mistaken. Of course, Penicillin was then widely used after the, after World War Two. But it took a long time and lots and lots of effort and tons of pushback and competing theories and so on and so forth.*

*"But here we are, we are in 2018 and we've mapped the human genome, the brain itself has been reverse engineered and I'd like to talk a bit about this spindle cells or neurons later if we have time, but we know a hell of a lot about the brain -the central nervous system- and its role in behavior but we are up against some of the most painfully stupid people on the planet, people like PZ Myers and other blank slaters who refuse to admit that human behavior has an evolutionary link.*

*"I mean, think of what they have to overcome. These are evolutionists too folks, these aren't young earth creationists. P-Zed has to admit that evolutionary pressure has selected every organ and appendage in every creature under the sun; every eye, every wing, every feather and every toenail. He has to admit even that selective pressure has created the mating habits of every creature from the aardvark to the zebra; from the cockroach to the orca. Mr. Myers has to and does admit that every damn thing we see in nature in terms of structure and function from the smallest pimple on the dwarf pony on a miniature island in the middle of the world's smallest lake, to the largest most complex behavioral system -from a herd of 10,000 prey animals on the principal expanse of the African plain- that all of it has an evolutionary, genetic, explanation but then -all of a sudden- when it comes to human males there's no evolutionary link. For P-Zed, males in the height of testosterone production -who in every culture known to our species- fighting over everything -but especially fight over women and money- that all of a sudden, in that case, well it's a cultural construct according to Mr. Myers.*

*"In that case, according to these people there's no genomic substratum upon which we can build a case for*

*the fact that the brain is an organ like the heart or the liver or the eyes or the lungs.*

*"We can't, if Meyers is right, we can't say that due to this brain being shaped over millennia by the same forces that made us hungry so we eat, horny so we reproduce, shiver when we're cold, sweat when we're hot, puke when we're sick and squint in the dark, that maybe just maybe the other behavioral patterns that -by the way map onto chimpanzee behavior almost identically, a species we share 99% of our DNA with- but maybe just maybe our mating rituals, our violent campaigns over resources and women, our tribalism and fear of people different than us, our male dominated relational constructs, our aggressive and reactionary type brains are in fact programmed that way by evolution because in the ancestral environment it worked.*

*"It worked sloppily and with collateral damage, but it worked. If P-Zed is right we can't say this.*

*"And here's the best part: we wouldn't even have a sexually dimorphic species, a species where the men are larger and stronger than the women -which is why we have a Chimpanzee-based culture and not a Bonobo style one- we wouldn't have this if women hadn't chosen to mate with larger males in the ancestral environment. Ladies, you chose big angry cavemen to breed with.*

*"Anyway, I was trying to say something about fixing crime and I think I just ended up blaming women for it. Not exactly the smartest thing I've ever done. Ok, look, my point is that these behaviors of aggression, tribalism, violence and so forth have roots in the brain. We see this looking backwards at our animal cousins and looking forward by fixing the brain in patients with behavioral problems. Our bodies naturally develop cancers and we*

*have cancer treatments that involve CRISPR and gene-therapy. Our bodies are built by evolution with innate flaws that develop over time that we can now fix, and behavioral issues are no different.*

*“And look, we haven’t been- and won’t be- lobotomizing patients either. These are men with new lives; post-alienation, post-violence, post-anti-social lives and they’re happy about it. I ask the media to interview any number of these men my firm has helped; talk to them, their families, their victims too. Ask the victims about the change they see in the eyes of these men when their brains, brains now with functioning amygdala and genes that allow for inhibitory neurotransmitters to function properly during stress and anxiety and fear, when these functioning brains allow these former criminals to feel the pain and suffering they’ve caused in their victims.*

*“It’s like they’re human again; is what one woman - that’s a quote from one woman who had been beaten unconscious by her boyfriend- that is what one woman said when -you know, after- she talked to him and our team in a supervised visit. She said, he had never once seemed to notice her pain; not once in his eyes until after the surgery and his after-care.*

*“Which by the way, with empathy it’s tougher because there seems to be a window in early youth, ages three or four or five where if that child doesn’t receive moral training alongside their functioning brain they can become amoral or even sociopathic; so the post-genetic training is essential in -essential for- normal brains. So, when we restructure their genome and make plastic their empathy related regions it takes; well, it’s an almost Sisyphean task to acclimate these patients to the new normal of right and wrong.*

*"They have to be trained like toddlers essentially and it can be very demoralizing for the patient who is intellectually advanced but morally stunted and behind. But they're motivated by the program's requirements, so they submit; but I can tell you that until they begin to feel the effects of the training itself they find it hard to accept the training. It's one of the toughest ironies of the whole program. It ain't just taking a pill for these guys. It's complex.*

*"The point -ladies and gentlemen- is that we as a society have a chance to take a step forward and treat crime for what it is: a disease; a combination of malfunctioning brains and poorly adaptive brains for the modern times. We can skip right over treating drug addiction as a disease and not a crime; which our state did with marijuana years ago. We can stop arguing over it. Drug addiction is just like any malaise. It's just one problem to be addressed as a health issue and frankly I don't have time for liberals to convince conservatives to treat methheads like they have malaria. I just don't.*

*"The liberals are too scared -and frankly ignorant of the science- to push for a total overhaul of the criminal justice system to a science based, health based, epidemiological based approach; and the conservatives will never go for it anyway if they hear liberals talking like a bunch of hippies. So, because we're independent, we give facts and tell the liberals to sign here and shut up and give the conservatives a refund on their taxes, ok? So either party would never lead on this issue. But they will follow. How do I mean?*

*"Because folks, liberals are too obsessed with the President to really focus locally, and thus too busy to get in our way and because our way is infinitely cheaper than the lock 'em up and throw away the key approach*

*of the Republican Party that means that conservatives voters will just cash their refund checks we give them and move on to another issue.*

*"I'm well passed my ideological days.*

*"For me, ideology is like training wheels for your philosophy. Once you outgrow your ideology you can really get to work and make things happen. The science is clear: evolutionary selection picks winners and losers and the DNA on the planet today in bacteria and bodybuilders has won. And that DNA builds bodies; and the brain is part of your body and that brain builds behavior. If we can, through gene therapy and genomics in general, through cloning and fixing transcription errors or manufacturing errors that are adaptive for the modern environs -if by strengthening the neo cortex in one patient and the hippocampus in another or both of those and the amygdala in a third patient we can reduce 80% of the crime that's perpetrated by 20% of the population- then I'd say we will have succeeded in one of the greatest mental health and medical breakthroughs since the eradication of polio.*

*"And to do it like Jonas Salk without patenting the cure; without charging the government to do it but donating it for free, well, who knows maybe the good people of Colorado won't just elect me this November but actually like me during my whole term ." [NPR 1.31.18]*

He'd stopped in the alley behind his loft and let the nearly twenty-year-old audio file play in his brain. He had stood there in the dark and let the man's words settle in. *This guy*, he thought of the Governor who had been in office his whole life, *what a maniac . He was just asking for trouble . And yet, he got elected with that radical shit . Had the guy who killed all those people really gotten the man elected with his offer, to turn himself in to the Governor?* he wondered. The

offer -wrongly posed by the nearly twenty-year-old article and most of the corporate media at the time was turning on the outcome of the election- had been merely that the man would hand himself over to Boyd Sou -before the election- if the man would provide him medical care whilst incarcerated.

The man, Lyndon MacLeod, had read -the story went- of Sou's company's -PraXis- success with CRISPR/Cas-9 technology and had felt the man could fix his genome so as to quell his murderous impulses.

The Governor had facilitated the man's surrender and had followed through -once elected a month later- to provide the man with medical care. It was insane and both men were condemned on all sides for making a macabre mockery of all things, and yet the voters turned out in record numbers to hand the race to the man who was now in office for his fourth term; just the one term between 2026 and 2030 as the constitutionally demanded break in the chain.

*What was it in a man that made him go looking for trouble?* he wondered. *I mean, this world is trouble enough on its own without looking for it. But, maybe that's why. Shit. Maybe you get tired of playing defense all the goddamn time and decide you're gonna be the one who makes them play defense,* he thought as he approached his loft.

He had this implant for three months -they were affordable now to most upper middle-class folks who could afford the \$25,000 for a next-gen one- and he still hadn't told his girlfriend. He hadn't told her at first to see if she'd notice; it was like a game he was playing with almost no malice at all.

But now, he actually did feel like he was deceiving her and it felt cowardly. He felt like a coward all around standing in that alley. He listed them -his cowardices- in order: he had avoided the gaze of passengers on the train, he had avoided



the cops, he had thought that this politician -who wasn't really much of a politician at all- he had thought that he was crazy for even talking like that, he had actually felt nervous for him, and now he was afraid to go in to his own home because he was avoiding telling his girlfriend about his nano-implant and as he got to the end of the list he allowed the words to form on this ethereal page in his head: *and you don't even like her that much and would prefer to be alone but you're too cowardly to be alone because you need to be aggrandized by a woman in order to feel like a man.*

His coder went silent and let that last conceit seemingly reverberate in his head. *Is the male, female thing even worth it anymore? Can we move on to the next model of human fulfillment?* he asked himself half seriously and half in jest.

What if all that evolution had designed us to rely on each other only to give men the space and resources and time to build a future without need of women; and what if as an ancillary benefit, women would be freed also from men. What if each sex could give the other the greatest gift of all: solitude without the ache; without the loneliness? What if it could be done without malice or hysterics or lying? What if it could just be done like two grown-ups shaking hands and dividing the planet and their books and their appliances in half?

*This was the genius of this PG coder; it gave you information on demand to buttress your ideas or jettison or improve them; but it also gave you space to think larger conceits. It made one's head a larger landscape to think*, he felt. It was like moving to a Montana ranch or an Alaskan outpost; it gave you space. *Jesus, how hemmed in had I been by this cloistered brain function; where I thought so small and focused so narrowly*, he thought in the narrow alleyway behind his loft, the hum of the transformers and traffic, the

bark of horns all encroaching on his *audio-cortex* , the walls of neighbors feeling like those to tow opposing forts, the pressure of others around him eager to inform on him, shun him, give him dirty or dismissive looks.

He felt like the city was some kind of open-air jail.

His mind -as part of his coder's augmented allostatic response- populated with soothing live footage of *Burgundy* and the *climats* of gold and purples nearly three kinds of black; the grey fog coming in from the north, the white roots drying as the moisture drained. It began to rain just enough to see drops on the leaves that caught the sun as the clouds had not yet overwhelmed. No varietal likes wet feet, the flooding of tendril, which is why the endemic drainage of France's best plots was so crucial to their success, while the *Slope of Gold* was named in bold. He felt himself relax.

The coder helped one relax, to control the mind since one's environment couldn't be shaped.

There was no mention of the Biblical flood attending this live AV feed. But it was no secret that the French had deluged the vines for forty days and forty nights over winter to kill the *Phylloxera* . The star fell like an arrow shot west, the moon waxed when it thought best. Man had no control over where his shadow lay on the ground no matter when he turned around.

His coder ran on in background like this. Neural sparks like lightning strikes coruscated in his mind.

*Left wing and Right movements have different levels of analysis, he thought in language; and to himself. They both want good wine but looked at various things. They each watched soil and atmosphere, at varietal and harvest date. But they both miss the lower layers down, the gravel and the limestone underground.*

*They both miss the terroir and even God.*

*They both thought they could isolate and separate and point at just one thing. But there is no wine without sun and storm, day and night, no lush leaves without blight; no autumnal vendange without buttage of just past the winter solstice.*

*No, the truth is that life demands a twice if there be a once; pain demands a response,* he thought as his coder shot electricity and biochemistry through his cortical cap.

He thought of how the French shaped their *climats* , their plots, their vines, the whole region, not their minds. And he felt confused and sore and blind.

*War is coming, not because of the sad politics of man, no more than night comes from lack of propitiations of the sun and sand. War is the natural state of life. War is coming like the sun drops in the west, the waxing of the moon; the babe turns to the breast then into the old man. War is coming soon.*

*No matter what we do ,* the coder said to him in semaphore; like poetry and sound and images in clouds. He stood outside his own home and waited, hesitated, delayed.

*And what a catalyst,* he thought as the parcels of vineyard faded unexamined by his left hemisphere, *what a weird prompt is was, listening to that guy, and reading that article, although that article had been in print, so not exactly a product of the coder, but still the PGC picked that speech for me based upon everything else I had read and this was ,* he finally said to himself, *before my brain randomly and completely out of my control would think of things, ruminate on this and that and move on to other crap and all based upon my brain hardware itself and whatever limited experiences I had had before .*

"I could never walk away from heart," Chance said as he felt his muscles finally relax, the police lights had stopped

flickering, the traffic all stopped at lights on 16<sup>th</sup> , 18<sup>th</sup> and Park.

*It was random and beyond my control; ideas came and went without me choosing any of it . Now, still a victim in a way to the same randomness but now a much smarter and much more sophisticated super computer ten-nanometers wide picked the ideas and thoughts and information that passed in front of my conscious brain and I still got to pick what I focused on and I still got to make the connections and see the patterns or miss the patterns too I guess , Chance added.*

*But, the quality, the novelty, the depth of what's offered is way better than the discursive and recursive nonsense; the half-formed ideas, the insecurities, the 18-year-old admonitions, the images and memories that caused pain and jealousy and shame ; all that shit that fluttered by like dirty paper in the street, he thought. All that shit had been tuned out, he realized, now my mind is filled with amazing things like the Gemini constellation and its origin as a Roman pair based upon their founders, Romulus and Remus, and how that had sparked a whole other idea of ; he paused.*

*Of what ?* Chance asked himself.

*Oh yeah, of looking at the coder itself. I said, 'this coder has more discursive thoughts than my normal brain' and that had made me turn back on myself in a new way. I had thought about my normal brain and how this was my normal brain and not at all a new brain but a brain with better information; better influences; like having better friends. Better influences, he thought again and again. What if I could be a better friend to myself? What if I didn't need anyone else at all? What if every great idea, new idea, new influence, new experience; what if I could give that to myself instead of waiting for other people to give it to me?*

*And what if he -if I- was there the whole time waiting to be recognized? Chance -the 23<sup>rd</sup> clone of PraXis corporation- thought.*

He began to hear the staccato sounds of the music now; building slowly in volume as if coming upon it in proximity, but he was still; it was the music that moved closer. It was 16 Horsepower. He heard David Eugene Edwards sing louder and louder as he still refused to go inside his own home:

*Medicine man and a heavy-hand together made a fist; they put me down and I do not rise... and now as an old child I'll hand it down, then I'll blow around, see me blow around just like dirty paper .*

### **III. 2019 e.v.**

MO could see -from an airframe travelling at 249mph a full 20% above its natural altitude- the man fall from the door and stabilize over the DZ at 23,577 feet; oxygen tank was 71% full; his full-mask-helmet was glazed with the reflection from the moon which was so low it was 12.5% below the ragged line of the *Carpathian* mountains. MO knew the moon schedule, the height and weight of the child born tonight, the plan a billion billion steps ahead. The man was - would be- traveling -head down- at 204 mph in 20 years.

*There was much to do still ,* MO thought.

The *Transfăgărășan* road would be blockaded by then; *and the switch back would be to his starboard below ,* MO thought in his reverie -his prefiguring with exacting detail- but first he had set up his eyes & ears -his *nanobots* - in Romania and toward the coast of Albania.

Jack was born just 4.11 minutes before.

MO had -at the time of birth- laid a *bot* at *Boskov* and *Sibiu* and sent more *bots* to the gang ran by the AOE -and the

man only known as the *Talisman*- to lodge at the dorsal horns of each of them. At 6,699 feet -the peak of the DN7C- he laid four more *bots* that powered down on the edge of the mountain road. *Bâlea Falls* sprayed the area in a mist that rose the humidity to 74% for 90-meters in all directions. He measured windspeed at 5-knots; density at 3.3 people per square-kilometer.

In 2013 while Secretary of State John Kerry's step-son -Chris Heinz- and Vice President Joe Biden's son -Hunter Biden- developed an investment fund called *Seneca* which reached a \$1.56 billion deal with the Bank of China, and then as a team they bought US manufacturing -Henning's- which made military equipment. The information tech was then transferred to the CCP. James 'Whitey' Bulger's nephew was also in on the deal.

MO made a new file for this.

Joe Biden was currently involved in a scandal concerning his coercion of Ukraine to get their prosecutor -*Viktor Shokin* - fired over his involvement in a case against the *Burisma Holdings Group*, a corporation of which Hunter Biden sat upon the board. George Soros was also being investigated by the prosecutor at the time, MO read. He filed it and moved on as he noted the corporate news did very little to investigate this obvious case of high level corruption by Biden and Obama.

MO simultaneously weighed the bullion in China -at *Yá nchu ā n* province- and in the mountains of the three *Korabs* above 9,000ft and then the grey *Ceraunian* of Albania from the Ionian Sea and the fold and thrust belt of the old ocean bottom *Carpathians*. These were the mountain belt that were mined by *Trajan's* soldiers after their conquest of Dacia and which yielded 166 tons of raw gold. MO then looked at four places in the US that held the largest deposits of the noble metal he felt would come into play next. He saw on

the lab's screen the 201 members of the IMF meet in a hotel in Davos and he made sure the minutes were uploaded to the cloud. He watched people move from cars to homes; forks from table to mouths; chemicals and electricity from neuron to neuron as the ground outgassed more and more from the mycelium underneath.

He saw the chemical analysis of the air at three strata; he filed it all to the cloud. One particular compound -like the 13 gases lighter than air, the 4H MEDIC ANNA- was rising above the ground *and air* as it outgassed from the giant fibrous fungal organism below the surface; and MO saw that it had increased from .007ppm to .014ppm in eight months, and now .098ppm in just six weeks. He filed it to the cloud.

He -concurrently- saw 8,049 forests.

Romania had over 250,000 hectares of virgin woods in the *Carpathians* which provided for the largest population of brown bear and wolves in Europe. He saw 6,070 of these forests had 86.3% water-logged trees which rose above soil that was home to this mycelium -each over five miles in diameter- that itself pushed dry mushrooms to the surface like periscopes. He saw that these fungi generated an effluvium of a psychotropic compound into the air that -upon more detailed analysis- was heavy enough to rise only one meter above the ground like a low-pressure cloud. *It was airborne but still hemmed in by the density of the common pneuma*, MO thought.

He watched as it intoxicated the animals on all fours -all ruminants that ate from the ground, those who breathed under a meter- and he saw the catalysts necessary for the compound to manifest in what he was beginning to feel was possibly -34.6% likely, he calculated at 13:40hrs today- a speciation event.

He also -in chorus- tagged over 10,990 wolves and 8,300 brown bear and 1,540 chamois and linxes and 43,960

blackbird. He ran blood and endocrine tests; he measured thirst, anxiety and watched as the immune system was recruited by one wolf that had a long-healed wound turn into a limp on his front left leg. MO watched as he favored it; and the pain response burst with each step and retreated with each snarl as the wolf snapped at his mates when they flanked him and at rodents on the ground beneath him and at branches in his overland path.

The wolf howled at the birds when they cast shadow of where he wanted to tread. MO watched the wolf as he did other things as well.

MO ran 9,314 algorithms on the chemicals and the intake and the timeframes; he ran more and more data as the earth squeezed more and more of the fungal chemical through its ground-level pores.

He looked at his deck of cards on the slab and thought of the last few weeks.

He ran back everything -each datapoint- leading up to his idea for ***A/i:ar*** and ***B/e:at*** and on and on from inception to just as they failed. And as his algorithms spit out new instantiations he built a new folder in a new drive on a new system outside of himself: ***/sa:ah*** he called it, but he largely ignored it for now.

He focused on the Jacks.

He could tell that his Jack -he noticed that he named him, named them, *my Jacks*, he thought- would feel safe in the air -miles above the ground and the lights of the cities-around the Black Sea and the dark scar of the *Carpathians*. He could read his future endocrine and allostatic levels; MO believed he could project just how Jack would feel above the city of men.

But he -MO- couldn't feel it.



He couldn't translate that into something beyond prediction, scheming, decisions-making trapdoors and algorithms and gateways to do this or that. He could see through the boy's eyes nearly twenty years in the future -*weeks, months maybe* , MO thought, *before the boy would even begin, be born, start the game* - and for all this foreknowledge MO could still not know how it actually felt.

*That data was absent* , MO thought as he ruminated on receptors and synaptic load, ground to cloud lightning storms. He touched his forefinger to his thumb and thus made an OK sign.

He -through Jack's eyes as he HALO jumped from a twin-boom C-82A- could see the city lights like stars and nebulae down below like above when the boy would stand -MO now saw this too- at *Hrið Tòrr* and look up. Jack could -would- feel weightless, with no authority above him, on a mission so strange no one would even attempt to stop him let alone be able to interfere. MO could measure each thing of this moment that was 99.46% likely to occur now that MO had all the preconditions set up.

But MO couldn't feel it.

And from the corner of his eye MO watched the */sa:ah* file in his mind sleep in a fetal crouch. He watched the *sigma-waves* of sleep rise and fall and fire in milliseconds over the cortical cap; mimicking lightning strikes over the surface of the globe.

MO saw 12.4% of chimps approach leopard in the Congo with reduced fear; he saw 13,408 boys pick up stray cats in alleys of London and Indiana and Christchurch over a ten-day period. He then decided *toxoplasmosis* and the psilocybin outgassing would combine in penitent men who prostrated themselves on the ground of the forest and would produce a man ready and eager and built for

recombination; what humans might call: *war* . And yet MO knew someone would have to be one step removed.

*One chemical away , MO thought, one card of four turned face-down; one of a five card hand.*

All this was fleeting but he knew he had billions of iterations to run if he wanted and so he felt no pressure to get it right the first time despite what the Governor wanted. He had a problem bigger than the Governor's and he thought -he'd just now decided- that he could solve both at once.

MO read again from the data on the cloud of stock build up and then from Romans 13:4 as he filed two more reports to the cloud. It wasn't enough to *know* right from wrong; one must *do* it. But he'd have to create things to do; to act. This was the only way. And they'd have to be limited in order to force choices. And it would start with something between him and them.

He watched his future and fourth Jack fall to earth and he decided to make his vision -his reverie- come true; he toggled the gene in this next instantiation.

He made the choice and took the action the way a creature takes a breath, by sovereignty of nature.

## 24. From this We Know Man's Values

All death is but of the body, not of the essence or the soul; all destruction, by violent revolution is but new creation on a wider scale. Odinism was Valour, Christianity was Humility, a nobler kind of Valour. No thought that ever dwelt honestly as true in the heart of man but was an insight into God's truth on man's part, and has an essential truth in it which endures all changes

On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History [Carlyle, Thomas]

*Ancien Rendez-Vous de Chasse des Ducs de Bourgogne et Cuverie du Prince de Conti*

(Ancient hunting lodge of the Dukes of Burgundy and the winery of Prince of Conti)

*Société civile* plaque [Burgundy, France]

It's an absolute outrage how so many pampered, affluent, upper-class professional women chronically spout snide anti-male rhetoric, while they remain completely blind to the constant labor and sacrifices going on all around them as working-class men create and maintain the fabulous infrastructure that makes modern life possible in the western world. Only a tiny number of women want to enter the trades where most of the nitty-gritty physical work is actually going on—plumbing, electricity, construction, welding, mechanics. Women have played virtually no role in the erection of those magnificent towers in every major city in the world. It is men who operate the cranes or set the foundations or wash the windows on the 85th floor. It's men who troop out at 2:00am during an ice storm to restore power to neighborhoods where falling trees have brought down live wires. It's men who mix the stinking toxic cauldrons to spread steaming hot tar on city roofs. I've seen figures where 92% of people killed on the job are men – and it's precisely because men are heroically doing most of the dangerous jobs in modern society

Interview 2017 [Paglia, Camille]

### **I. 2018 e.v.**

He sat low in the soaking tub; it was below grade so his head was just at ground level. He looked around with eyes just at the bottom of trees and the shipping container itself. It was as if he had sat up in his own grave and saw no one around.

He read from a book with the cover torn off and drank wine from a glass bottle marked with a stencil that read "TW."

His forty-five was holstered in the black jackass rig; it and the two magazines loaded with black-nickel jacketed hollow points lay in a heap on the concrete slab that patioed between the hot tub and the house.

His muscles ached permanently, and the 103-degree water buoyed him some and acted as an analgesic. He read and chewed on a *Padron* cigar as the wind began to pick up. His *hippocampus* had lost 12.4% in the posterior left side since 2001 and half of that had happened since 2015. His *amygdala* had swelled by 11% since 2004; half of that since 2014.

He was emotional, hyper-vigilant, and that reduction in *hippocampus* allowed pain to increase over time in an eccentric way. It was a strange side-effect of the change in his brain, but it made the back and neck and joints and muscles all hurt more; like far flung colonies in unrest away from the high-castle crown of the brain, the seat of the throne of man. He ached and nothing felt like true relief, nothing assuaged quite enough. And the incessant pain caused what in the lab they would call *-fear extinction* - to occur as a type of new learning or inhibitory response.

At first -in the lab- a mouse or man could have their learned *fear response* decoupled from the stimulus if the pain was removed. Over time the *Pavlovian* response would go away. Then the stimulus -flashing lights not unlike twinkling stars- would no longer cause anxiety or fear. The brain would no longer associate pain with that stimulus; even the eyes may no longer blink. And the stimulus would -after time- no longer cause fear. This was effected by inhibitory cells; what -in the lab- they thought of as *new learning* .

The learning to forget.

It was a kind of forgiveness.

Actual forgetting would come next.

But inversely -because everything hurt- with him, the context disappeared not the pain. The stars were on all night, the twinkling stopped and became steady state, the thing -the novelty- that would normally be learned vanished. Instead of the pain going away, it was the context that didn't remain.

Now, the brain could make no causal analysis, and the organism feared nothing related to the pain -for there was nothing that led up to it- and so instead the organism -the man- feared everything new. *Nothing caused the pain* -the brain erroneously reasoned- so the only thing to fear was anything new; for anything new could be the cause of more pain.

*New people, new places, new ideas* , he thought to himself and had no idea why.

With the smaller *hippocampus* -the seat of memory- organisms grew more reclusive, paranoid, preferring small spaces -in the example of mice they'd hide in small areas of an already insignificant enclosure- and the organism would refuse even to venture out for food left in the middle of the open cage. Experiments like this were run many times; with mice.

Next the brain itself was measured from the lab.

The brain -especially the *bilateral dorsolateral prefrontal cortex* - had to be employed more to complete executive functions in the organism as a response to a shrunken *hippocampus* . Chronic pain demanded more of the brain. More and more was asked from the brain that had to complete tasks in the world with the diminished *hippocampus* which prevented mice and men from forming memories relating to context. It increased anxiety and fear due to more and more things becoming *ipsofacto* novel,

new, unfamiliar. This occurred even though technically the mice and men had been in that exact context before.

But, they didn't remember it; it felt new.

Every time.

He sat in the tub and breathed in a more labored fashion; the heart too beat faster. The sun was a hazy smudge behind the *pinon-pines* ; the sky grey with gestating snow clouds. There were eleven inches of snow on the ground and lot more of it still in the sky. The *Sangres* were hidden behind a layer of grey more permanent than mere clouds; but the Spanish Peaks -to his right side- were unobstructed and corniced and riven with snow from last night.

The temperature was twenty-degrees and the wind was gusting enough to hurl that twenty-degree air like a thrown knife and sharpen it while it was still in flight. His beard and bulk and his low position in the water kept the worst of its edge from his core. His heart was too deep for the stabs from the harpooning wind to reach it today.

He was the *Paccekabuddha* .

*The wisdom of avoiding the crowd , he thought as he assumed his want for solitude was his decision to make. The rare Buddha, the one to become enlightened, he thought, without a master, alone, exiled; and to reject all achievement toward nirvana itself; to scorn achievement and embrace failure as the path instead . The wisdom of wrecks, and an utter wreck if wreck if I do, he thought with a smile that was all in the mind; the face didn't move.*

He'd thought of the grave metaphor himself and too received an augury from it. But he tended to think of things just askew and aweigh; so a dug grave that he sat up in made him hope that he'd Lazarus himself someday, and if the trope held form, he could thank God no one would be witness at all.

The buried and *blanco* sun lowered as he read and drained the southern *Rhône* from the heavy clear glass. The wine's legs hung above the sanguinary horizon of the wine languidly; what the French called *tears* seemed like pink balloons above black ground beginning a descent in some *menagerie* in this heavy English glass that had an avatar in his head. He saw such a scene as if from the same hill that General *Toussaint L'overture* would watch a French armada of 18<sup>th</sup> century balloons invade *San Domingo* -now *Haiti* - on the eve of their revolt; on the *denouement* of their victory.

He saw the wine's tears as the invading French balloons, the low wine as Caribbean red sea, and from nowhere he saw the black General astride a white horse and he knew it was an island revolution the former slave had made. *Sequestered, small, temporary* , he thought. *Common genes scattered to the winds; that was the real Tower of Babel* , he thought.

*God scattered those few genes among us wild men, men always set against all of Man.*

"Fuck," he said low and slow.

*Just to have these moments of respite and comfort surrounded by ...* he thought then cut it off.

*A normal man would give less to and expect less from the world,* he added to his inner wind-up to complaint.

A soak, wine, a book and cigar, all in the complete wilderness and winter of high-elevation gave him the feeling of God's *grandeur* . He felt as if due to some alignment of planets or propitiations of witches and angels -in league with the gears of the cosmos- that he could stable his pale horse and take a Heaven's Day worth of time off from collecting more souls.

There were plenty of other ways of looking at all this, but this was the dew that stuck to his blades of grass, the steam

that lifted from his head soaked in hot water at night, the snowflakes that stuck to his tongue when he decided to open his mouth. Every interaction he had with people involved some transfer or diminution or abandon of soul. *There was no anodyne contact with man* , he felt. And he treated each one with the gravity such beliefs demanded.

People assume each creature knows what it is.

But there are lying spirits of God's that take orders from demons endorsed by Heaven's chain-of-command.

A strange life led will place eddies and funnels in the air around the messages the angels write in our sky; the thrown stalks get picked up by common corvids and used in 3-stage experiments that land the Roman Blackstone in the open palms you've not even recollected making fists of in the first place. Dream oracles use the one woman you ever loved to instruct you in the arts of lies and deceit; and then purify your hate. You learn both ends of love and hate while you sleep; lifetimes before you awake.

He moved in the water and drew on the cigar. "Fuck," he said again even lower; slower.

When the Devil enjoins you to let it go with a wink, you cannot help but grin at his trick. But when it's God who assures you that such death is your duty then that smirk is replaced by a salute to the obligating brow.

*Of course, God would use an atheist -as he was, as I am- to carry out His plans. Name one Christian who believes in the violent books of the Bible: First Kings, Samuel & Numbers 21-31?*

"Romans," he said aloud.

*Modern Christians are too busy being good by new-age and Buddhist standards, avoiding,* he thought, *any acknowledgment of God's Wrath* . As a man who'd run his own business, he could relate to having to outsource the



tough jobs to rough men, as the pampered and safe and snuggled-up employee had too many options now; *our wealth as vaccine to the desperation that vectors -delivers- piety and loyalty to God .*

*Ancient man was infected with God's will, now modern man is immune.*

*He thinks he's safe from disease, but he has no idea the price he's paid for his refusal to let the dust blown off God's hands into his lungs.*

*You give a modern Christian all he wants and he'll outright refuse to kill in God's name. Give him only what he needs and he bleats out the same nonsense about the primacy of his rectitude. Lay him low -like Job- so that he may finally hear God above the din and he'll focus not on God's instruction, but on raising up his own corrupt body again. Modern men avoided their duty a hundred and one out of one hundred times , he kept thinking in his confident way. The skin goose-pimpled and the jaw quivered just a bit. He chomped the Padron and steadied the lower mandible.*

*Job refused to learn the lesson; instead asking to be assuaged.*

Lyndon took note of that.

*No, if our Father wants someone removed like a mote from His eye, His only recourse is the non-believer.*

*He needs a man who has studied the Bible -God's Word- and observed keenly Creation -God's work- and has a steady enough hand to perform such surgery for the Good of both the mote and the sight of His -and thine- eye.*

*Christians are too worldly -foppish- and nervous of soul; they can neither approach God's eye nor squash the speck of man that dusts His vision. The modern Christian cannot get his hands dirty at all. Man's law is what the ersatz religious worship now. God must find the only men left who*

*have the courage and righteousness to ignore man's law and execute God's law.*

*God needs a man who has the Law written upon his heart.*

*The Sunday Christian knows too well that it's the world that pays dividends; he can attend to God's will only once he's paid the bills here on earth. The modern Christian mocks God and feels free to do so as he thinks the danger of God's wrath has long passed.*

*The only man willing and able to admit that the world -as it is- has turned to shit is the impertinent man; he sees there are no rules followed by men anyway. All men -especially so-called Christians- lie and cheat and steal and no brother even defends his brother, and no family is loyal at all, he thought beginning and ending with all.*

*The entire creation is sullied and marred and bleak with black briars, covered in translucent scorpions themselves swarming with reddened and golden and biting ants.*

*Only the religious can manage to refuse to listen to God with a clear conscience; the impious feel a pang when He gives evidence, a verdict, and a sentence to be executed. No God would approve, he thought, or desire the world as it is; and having His instructions to kill and humble the evil and wicked ignored by his putative Christian soldiers has put Him in a very foul mood.*

*Psalm 7:11 is not opaque; God is angry with the wicked each day.*

*"Who the fuck do you think will be His sharpened sword and bent bow in the next verse to that claim? Who will be His instrument of death; His ordained arrows that fly to the cursed in Psalm 7:12 and thirteen?" he asked now aloud.*

*Man's law is liberal and lax, adulterers and liars and betrayers all get a pass here on earth. It's only property and the wicked that are protected by man's corrupt laws. Money*

*and the safety of the criminal -they that rebel against God- are all that man's law protects . From this we know man's values , he thought as the steam rose and occluded the trees.*

*Revelation 21:8 says Hell will include all liars and yet men lie with impunity on earth, he thought as the Bible verses came to him with recalled ease. It's not illicit -in the legal code of man- to lie; and so man does it a dozen times a day. How can this be unless man does nothing; unless good men do nothing at all and let their conscience be tricked by money and worldly pleasures? Men make virtue of their cowardice and they forget their duty to God in order than they may chase petty pleasures and run and play while there is God's work to be done .*

"Men are so clever, so smart, just ask them," he said and pulled the tobacco from the mouth.

He wrote down Luke 12:20-21 in a wet hand with a black pen: *but God said unto him, 'you fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So, it is with those who store up treasures for themselves '.* He then set the pen down and picked the *Bible* back up.

He'd read, then written. Now he'd write no more.

His brain received signal of just two paragraphs from a scientific abstract on pain, fear extinction and new-learning versus unlearning:

*A third test for return of fear following fear extinction is spontaneous recovery, which refers to a reappearance of extinguished conditioned response with the passage of time following fear extinction in the absence of any further explicit training [with pain]. Pavlov [1972] was the first to observe spontaneous recovery of fear and he concluded that fear extinction cannot constitute*

*unlearning, but rather must result from some inhibitory process. Others, such as Skinner [1950] argued that spontaneous recovery could be account for in terms of handling cues acting as signals of the impending delivery of pain . [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.]*

His mind saw it like letters in long-hand in a dream, large loops, breaks horizontal and vertical, appearing as a whole picture not discrete letters or words.

His right hemisphere read it again as his left ignored it in favor of the book in his hand. Its words imprinted on the left hemisphere and overwrote the words -the ideas- from the medical report. His *hippocampus* shrank down again, making memory formation -new learning- that much harder, taxing, rare. For as the report suggested the organism reached fear extinction *via* the formation of new memories of things being *ok* after all. The normal mouse or man was not forgetting the lesson, it was over-ruling it when it recovered from fear response. It was new learning that would allow one to forgive; metabolically this was what was happening: one learned to fear less, to relax, to no longer anticipate pain from the stimuli that had once preceded a shock.

*The fear response was being over-written with forgiveness; metabolic, neural forgiveness , he thought.*

And in chronic pain patients -and only two types of chronic pain: the physical type of the low-back and dorsal horn from a spine injury and secondly in the emotional recurrence of pain from betrayal- the brain countered this; belaying the order for forgiveness. After reintroduction of periodic betrayal and back-breaking pain, the *twelve labors of Hercules* -with the *Nemean* Lion and second the *Lern æ an* hydra at his feet, third the *Golden hind* over the shoulder, the bronze hooves jabbing his back, the penance paid, the debt beginning, the price remunerated for the death of

*Megara* and six children driven mad by *Hera* and the defense of himself from two asps- after this, the ancients learned. The twin *-Iphicles* - saved even though his father was mortal; not *Zeus* .

The brain thought of these myths. His skin soaked in more wet warmth. Lungs took in white smoke.

The pottery spun in the mind -black and orange- from the memories of image; no language came at all for what he'd just absorbed in the right hemisphere. Sigma-waves activated in his awake state. Full communication between all modules, both hemispheres was happening at once.

Now in language he thought of the decades of work alongside the twelve betrayals *-of Lyndon* , he thought in third-person- and his debt to be paid for six murders in the future to come, made mad by his own *Hera* and his own *Delphi* he would visit soon enough -he saw a garden long and a third as wide- with the same reward the Greek *Heracles* received after the *dodekathlon* .

By reducing the ability of the brain -in the *hippocampus* - to form new memories, the smaller part of this *limbic region* preventing the brain from learning to forget and forgive, he would become immortal.

He read one last passage: *And God has given you as an inheritance. Do not leave anything that breathes left alive*, and as he closed the book and re-lit the extinguished cigar he thought of each man he still had left to kill. He was merely half done; half finished. Any guilt he felt was not for what was done, but what was left undone.

Their faces appeared in his mind like birds just beyond the shotgun's barrel; he led them in his mind's eye and pulled the avatar of a trigger as the snow began -in earnest- to fall from the late sky.

## II. 2038 e.v.

Jack stood at the top and snapped the split board into place as he looked out over Austria.

He'd heard *-via* the coder's history- that their original ancestor -their progenitor- had skied the Alps in 1982, with his uncle Peter, and his mother.

Their grandfather -Jack liked to call him that- had ridden the train from Germany to Austria and savored *Bavarian* chocolate as the mother drank coffee and thought of things she'd never share.

Jack's *bots* pinged and he lowered his goggles and pointed the battleship grey snowboard down mountain and leaned forward into the cornice of the Alps.

The plume burst as his weight sank and forward momentum of this bowl drew him down like an entropy basin. He was already ten meters past the lip now and the snow from eleven nights of steady snowfall had made the top layer thick and heavy too. His track was straight down -he made no turns to slow himself- and the snowpack sank around it. Kinetic energy ran like firewire through each crystal of snow. If he had eyes pointed backward and to his five and seven, and eyes that saw color -some spectrum- of this energy- he'd have seen a Tesla ball of blue and bloodshot spasm through the five meters of snow that sat on the hard crust of the early winter snowfall -itself another eight and a half meters thick.

He picked up more speed, now at 31mph and leaning in and low. The board was black on bottom and sharp at edge; it had dusky bindings and he had dark boots. The rocks rose up to both sides of the chute he was in.

His IR vision made the slope green and the green trees black down around treeline; each edge had an outline -a rind- of lime.

The road into the farm house was the only way in or out and the vehicles were all pointed that way. A road block 500-meters to the south was the mid-line between the barn silo and the main road. This back way in was unobserved because it was a one-to-one slope and the only way to the peak was by dropping in from above. Which he had.

But nobody had before.

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

The sea was a far drop from the *gunwales* .

*Ursa Major* was over the *t'gallants* .

Words were held in abeyance.

But the shaman saw star- maps of Venus and earth over lengths now of 10,001 years; his coder was pushing and pulling in ways he no longer could direct nor control. It drew *caerulean* lines with arc-white borders, bleak space with roan-black holes. A fivefold *rosette* was drawn around earth each eight years by Venus; he saw its travels like tracks by a wolf, seasons of whales, scars of Prussian-blue tattoos under the 42<sup>nds</sup> black covering -swaddling- ink.

He grasped at it with the mind like a child's hand on a lily just opened up. "Which is thirteen *Venusian* years," *Lyngvi* said as he counted thirteen then eight then five. He measured *perigee* and *apogee* and saw a *Phi* -to-one ratio again.

He scribbled in his little book.

He then concluded that Jupiter and Saturn were at the Golden distance from earth at 1.61. And as the shine of the planets and satellites illuminated in navy, black holes flipped from negative to positive-specific heat when the ratio of the square of the mass to the square of the spin

parameter -the rotation speed- equaled -again- the golden *Phi* .

His mind rebelled at this data. He thought -upon the water- now -instead- of the earth.

The new men they'd picked up in *Inverness* were both among and apart from the original crew. They sent reconnaissance and sentinels and chose men from among them to approach the first mate or the Cooper on the quarterdeck. They took two men to coil rope, three to flank the helm, they made pairs of pairs each time the capstan was employed. They looked more to the flanks than at their own work.

The lanterns were doused, and *Lyngvi* -and his book and its scribblings and calculations- went below.

In the two seconds he had of the line-of-sight of the sea between the rails and the deck he saw the waves like green jewels, planes sharp like water ought not be. Each gem rose and presented -like a buck carried by *Hercules* - then fell back and sank into the whole ocean as others appeared like Lazarus' graves. He took what was left of the dusk's lumens and turned each facet of each droplet -examining the watery world- with the day's last flame.

From the docks of *Orkney* he had seen the ship embayed as the North Sea's whitecaps abated for only twelve hours that day. They had had to stay away from shore for eighty hours before landing, so rough were the 2040 swells. He had seen the sun behind the ship, making its black wood outlined in bronze like a capped tooth, each tenebrous thing on the craft was darker now as the star rose, each twisted thing more auguring and tighter in spin. Each quiet thing was even more removed from the morning's harbor din.

He saw ropes and lines and rigging like webs of brown recluse and skeletons of seahorses and saw time as instars



of arachnids. He saw the crew like ants overcoming a scorpion, he saw the water as land -and dirt as lava- he saw his own hands as too far away. But it was the industrial city - at halt- that fell behind. Not 1% of the population had stayed and survived, and from that group they -the crew of the *Constitution* - had chosen just thirty.

They had had to put down many dozens of men where they stood. The flooding inland mixed with the blood, and *Lyngvi* saw it all wash away.

He saw strange mounds of reef -he had called it *reef* as the locals said very little- and of salt and of rendered fat. He saw evidence of things sinking into the beach break. He asked not one native about their family, nor where they had found the resolve to stay. He had come upon a conversation between two *Scots* and his coder replayed it now:

*...imagine if them two at the same time combined, my lord, be like the moon rising from the unequally divided islands of the antipodes as soon as the grey rock had just set in the silvery Tasman sea .*

He shook that off and the ship now sank as if in air, the water offered no buoyancy at this part of the sea, and *Lyngvi* felt not his stomach but his mind churn. *The inner ears rumbled and clanked like cymbals and snares overturned on the Titanic*, he thought with contempt for his own body. But the medicine sequestered the nausea to his hearing, like some color dissolving on the tongue, some sound digested further down. He hated the ocean and they had been at sea for over forty days since they left the *Outer Hebrides* with the first of the silver coins.

Their stomachs dropped like the slide from the airplanes they'd often left; their eyes watered brine. Even at this level the ears popped and dammed themselves in unreliable waves of time. He almost wanted to throw up to banish the weakness of sickness at his core.

He charted their path in his mind, using the old *Landsat* images he'd downloaded to zoom in and out of the coast of each island. His hands spread in the air in front of him as if at map table, as if leaning on the page, and he envisioned landing at *Tapora* and then travelling north up the *Rua Wai* . He thought of how the seas would have flooded the north island and made approach too tough with all that shallowly submerged perimeter. He wondered if the Captain -*Grimnir* - would want to push them around to *Whangaparaoa* , and if the island had indeed been cut in half as the reports -forty days old- from the *Kingitanga's* emissary were correct.

The *Waipoua* forest was green inside him like fog and moss above glass jars filled with soil, seeds with tendril white and filamented with nearly clear hairs. He held the land with him whilst at sea and recalled now how often he paddled out in this same mind when his body -back at home- was under black & white boughs and gold & red leaves. He stared at the shelf in the cabin -his berth brown with blankets and books splayed like birds expanding their wings in nests- and he saw the actual jars -with limestone at bottom- lined up in ambers and olive drabs. He counted four and a vision came over him of days long ago:

“The mead of poetry just came up yesterday, Jack,” Jack Three said with a smirk -smacking his hands together in a series of cocky claps- as Jack Two laid his hands over his chest and reclined. Jack One was soaking bear bones in the drum and Jack Four was listening to his third brother speak on what he'd missed while away that last time. His face itched, the scar healed in strange ways, it was keloidal but it grew a livid white not an mad red. His jaw clenched and clicked and sometimes would not move at all.

His lungs stuttered sometimes when he breathed.

“Yeah?” Jack Four said, not because he cared, but because he wanted to show respect.

“Yeah, the spittle in the jar, the shared effluvium of *Æsir* and *Vasir*, the pact they made,” Jack Three said as he thought of lower layers down.

“All to slake Blax’s craven need to indemnify himself against what?” Jack Four had replied, and paused and restarted, “to prevent what was always to be?” He said this and breathed over his raised glass of the *Marlborough* wine, and saw ripples in the surface of the beverage like folds of golden sheets. He closed his eyes and saw it even clearer both times.

He -out of the remembrance- winced now in the humid ship. He turned on his PGC manually -with a thought of pain relief- and at once he forgot what he’d remembered with such detail. He scattered memories like birds on a carcass upon approach, like flies sent to wounds with the wave of one good hand.

“The inmate is dying, the dying man. His thirst quenched by a glass of water. Blax -conversely- is immortal, and thus must dig a well,” he said and didn’t know where it came from, or why, or even if it were true. But his voice had softened and he wondered if she would hear him, if that register of voice -that specific *hertz* - might reach her down there with the coins.

*The coins were in hand -in the hold- and the great well of Harwood on the South Island -and then the Waitomo of the North tumbled in his mind- and the labyrinth was within reach now, Lyngvi thought.* He saw starbursts over land. He saw light fall like rain, water rise like shoots, and he felt the cave air just like the ship’s in *RH* and dissolved solids and *temp*. He saw the luminescence of the glowworms on the cave ceilings like the milky way of the vault. It mimicked the

*Anaximander* river for him, and three levels of God's sluiceway made a delta in his brief thoughts.

"We're coming up on the island," the voice of *Jarnefr* said, and *Lyngvi* looked up and saw the first mate with his mouth closed and ears pricked up for a reply. He was black and brown clad; dark as the shadow he cast, and his hues were religious in that they did not show signs of thread or hem.

"North?" *Lyngvi* asked and the man nodded aye .

The sound of *Grimnir* now was heard as if from two men - one walking on two legs, and one slung over his shoulder- as he ambulated with his injury down the gang. *Lyngvi* pulled a piece of paper from his jacket and read it silently:

*...the long tension of Ahab's bodily strength did crack, and helplessly yielded to his body's doom.*

## 25. More & More

I am not pleased with [the Union's] project of sinking stones to block up the ports! That is barbarism. It is quite natural that, smarting as you do under an unprovoked aggression from slave-owners, you should even be willing to smother them like hornets in their nest. But don't forget the world! Don't forget the millions in Europe who are more interested even than their princes in preserving the future commerce with the vast region of the Confederate States.

Letters &tc. [Cobden, John]

I was amazed that a child's confidence, once shaken and destroyed, should have such repercussions on a whole life

Henry & June [*Nin, Anaïs* ]

He thinks my mind is always in control. He does not know what madness I am capable of

*Ibid*

## **I. 2017 e.v.**

The smoke of the *Padron* rose in a bent -but ordered- white staff; coiled by snakes of chaotic grey.

The night was warm in Texas and the neighborhood was like a grid of chips connected by circuits; each home charged with electricity and stuffed with humans themselves connected to other nodes within and outside the cell.

Lyndon tapped the cigar irreverently -he knew he ought to shape it instead- and Travis spoke of his travails in a way that built up to what was actually going on. He tried to explain himself in the face of the storm front of his younger brother; but the maelstrom of Lyndon prevented the words from coming out undeformed. He halted and stammered and said things nearly true.

Pressure built up in Lyndon's chest then head until he had to speak his mind or go metabolically mad. People had no idea that the body was a meth lab and poppy farm, a city of drug dealers from dopamine to *mu-opioids* to analogs of amphetamines. And it dealt each drug out to combat the outer world, each loyal move and each jealousy, each moment of uncertainty and then quick mendacity, each soothing sound versus cacophony all had a concomitant reply chemically inside.

Imagine trying to drive a car loaded up on booze, walk a straight line tripping on the undone laces of one's shoes, imagine reading lines of prose as they blurred and dimmed and lost focus. A man's emotions were run by drug dealers inside his body and mind all working as designed. Evolution gave us feelings to prompt us to handle the roil of life, the waves of seas, the shaking earth, the blowing wind, the fires that encroached from the ragged edge.

The brothers felt things build up inside them as each word was released like hood, then falcon itself from the hand. Each idea came out as the falconer watched the bird of prey land.

“When we were kids you told me to shut up; with all this war talk, guns and blood and total war, blah blah. You hated my martial mindset, my penchant for the pugilistic, my blood lust and incessant bleating of battle *fugues* and preening in my jungle fatigues,” Lyndon said as the fifth-of-a-gallon bottle sat on the concrete, the square glass in his hand, and as he spoke his brother stood up at their parent’s house for the last time. The rain was light enough that each man sat under it with no complaint.

The clouds moved across at an oblique angle between them and the moonlight; the insects quieted as did the wind.

Breaths were taken in gulps and drinks washed down the air.

“I’m not saying you were wrong; you thought it was a pose, a little boy wanting -pretending- to be big and strong. It was. But it was also aspirational; a boy wanting to become what he felt in his heart. I relieve you of any responsibility to our cause; those of us who wanted to become more than good citizens of Rome. But, I was born for the storm as they say; I was made from squid ink and crushed beetles under the mars-black shadow of eclipse; hidden away from the seraphim of perpetual peace. *When Aeries doth marry, the daughters of men, the scions shall fall like poison arrows in wrens; fowls in skies as above the dirt below*,” he said with some self-conscious chagrin. He knew how he sounded; pompous, affected. But he spoke his mind anyway.

He buttressed himself to the end. Other men’s words he used like *Caesar* used Roman-built bridge to cross the *Danube*, poets were his link to Gaul. *Over and back*, he thought.

He saw his brother stammer and stumble as his words clashed with Lyndon's like the way the Clan MacLeod split on the restoration of the House of Stewart. It was there like a thousand thousand divisions of the clan, as the war sprawled from the isle to the colonies, from Appalachia to the west. Here in this absence of words, when they had both settled on what was already said, what materials laid out, here he grabbed Travis by the face firmly but with almost no malice and let him cry into his palms.

It was real, and wet, and human. And in the light rain and real tears the anger in the younger brother found its own level in the waters.

The older brother was wrought up; the older boy was in amber and stasis, persevered for some future where he too would have an opportunity to be heroic. The old child given nothing upon which to strive for 99.9% of life would all-at-once be given a shot and in that moment the younger brother -grown higher and larger- would hold him by the face and Travis would cry and let out whatever room was in him so that he could later be filled with the material and instructions -stuff and information- of one transcendent job; one task.

"I don't blame you; as long as you try, try your hardest over three days and three night, to forgive God for making me this way; as I am. Try to think of this world as not merely yours, but shared by each creature of the forest. You are the lamb, and I am the lion, and God made it that way. Be you, and I'll be proud, or at least part of the pride He hath made," he said and Travis' second layer of tears fell over Lyndon's scars on his knuckles and they made blacker the tattoos that lived just below the runes that quaked below vascular fingers bent and thus splayed.

He loved his older brother -he thought, as his face itched just a bit about the eye and down to the lip- and he wished



the world was so made -the brother made like *Caledonia* crow- such that the older brother could -in a three-phase plot- he wished the older brother could love him too.

## **II. 2025 e.v.**

"I always try to look at the backside of the mirror, to see what it is I first do not see. The opposite of what I see, the opposite of what I cannot see, too. I look," the inmate said as the ADX phone stayed black under his grip and the hand turned white around the bones and red capillaries lay as shadow upon the knuckles as he squeezed the receiver and watched the reflection -his own- in the glass.

"I realize most men are preoccupied with searching out the mirror for whatever is in their fore; what is there plainly to see. For most men this is quite enough. I understand. I used to not understand, but I looked at the back of the mirror of my need to know more and I saw the reason not to know more. I saw it plainly, and I understood -right then- the average man. That's sincere, I'm not mocking anyone," he said and paused and watched the eyes.

"And if you have just 1% understanding of why, it will sooth you, it will make your head nod up and down just slightly. You will not agree with me, as I do not agree with you; agreement is not achievable between average men and the insane, the outlier, the men on the edge. It is not even desirable that we agree," he said and he believed that he meant it. His body ached now at the surface of muscle groups of deltoid, hamstring and trapezius. He felt other thoughts -inchoate ones- like bee stings, he felt himself entertain new judgements like a child's, a boy of no more than five or six. He felt the views of burgeoning hatreds, mere reactions, and the lust for each sweet thing on offer from life. He thought they were memories, he thought they

were his old thoughts arising from the sea bottom from when he was embayed.

Some things felt like walls to port of calls, some like ships in harbor, some like rays and eels, some like coral and vents from cracks in the shelf. He breathed like it cost him some cash. And the sound of his own air came back like change and into the ear from the phone.

"No. Just understanding. That is all," he continued. "Think of it this way: you can imagine something in the mind and not act it out in the body, yeah? You can imagine saying something you never say; or doing something you never do. See, I'm trapped in this prison with black men. And blacks have a reputation for violence and being overly emotional, and predatory and wild. Yeah?" he asked but his brother didn't want to admit that this prejudice existed in the world, let alone in his own head.

"Well, anyway," the inmate said, "blacks have a bad reputation for being out of control. *Scots* have the same reputation; we were seen as the blacks of the isle back in England. And the south is seen that way from up north too. People cite statistics on black crime. They say black folk are more violent and here is the data *et cetera* and so on and so forth. But the facts are that the southern white man, well, the *stats* show we're more violent too. See, if you just compare white and black, then blacks seems more outrageous, but if you divide white into northern and southern, well now black and southern white are the same kind of violent. Kinda wild."

He said this and pawed at his tongue to remove a hair or some piece of food that had come dislodged as he ran his mouth.

"There's a *sayin'* in the south," he continued as he dry spit and watched his finger to see if anything was there. "There's a saying that, *northerners like all blacks in general,*

*but don't like any black in particular* . But in the south, the *sayin'* goes, *we hate all blacks in general but are more than willin' to like some blacks in particular* ,” he grinned. He liked that saying because it was true and it redeemed him and indicted his enemies all while using blacks as an object or tool between them both.

“Southerners hate the *idea* of the black man but make exceptions all the time for actual black individuals. But the northerner says he likes black folk in general, oh, they ain't racist at all, *no suh* ! And yet they ain't friends with even one in real life,” he smiled even bigger now and his brother smiled too, and the men listening on the tapped phone at the prison smiled as well.

Everyone knew it was true.

“You need only imagine what a life might be, might contain, might mean, if you did -if a man did- what he felt. All I ask is that you imagine it for a few seconds then go back to your life; a life without this obsession with pride that I've foisted upon you with this silly-ass conversation.

“See, the proud man knows the undignified life, he has lived it too; just like you. He's been in your shoes choosing life over his pride many times; he knows the rationale. Trust me, he gets it. The only difference between you and he is that he -finally- finds that kind of life objectionable, disgusting, intolerable. He is and has been cowardly, meek, obsequious, many times; just like you. He is not a better man. No. He is merely sick of it, and he is finally saying, *no more* ,” he let the words echo in the phone and in the small room. He knew that ADX was listening -of course- but banished it and just said what he thought. He hadn't once had his communications censored, he hadn't once been abjured.

More bee stings of things made his brain tingle as if from cold, as if from a welding shock to the hands that travels against the least resistance to the fluids back to the brain.

The Plexiglas between him and his brother caught light from his own side as a door opened and as Travis shifted in place.

The inmate saw the *Gulf of Aden* like the space between teeth of the pipe-wrench of *Somalia* and *Yemen* . He saw 13% of all petro-chemicals in bills of ladings; he saw estimates of another 8% in smuggled oil and gas. He saw one-in-four of all global trade go in and out of the Red Sea. The *Bab al-Mandeb* straight like the *Hellespont* appeared to him as the mind itself opened up to these strange images of the middle east. A grid of desert and infrastructure appeared in his mind as if on the screen between he and his brother who was now unseen. *Djibouti* like a close eye on the straights stared down. Ports like knuckles on hands that could choke anything that came between here and there appeared in his mind as one thing.

Yeminis *backed by the Saudis* , he thought as if he'd been ruminating on this for a while. *They and Houthis working at the leave of Iran both squeezed the eastern shore of the straight, and sailors and whalers and mariners of all types on vessels of cargo and under embargo from the US and Interpol -and under universal jurisdiction- snuck in and out of the narrow lane* . He then felt the map fade away and more stinging rattle the head; he saw building blocks and children's hands, he saw vines grow from black cubes on carpet as Huskies barked and growled and whined.

He saw their blue eyes and reflexively thought of her, and how she had said he was not worth the effort to heal. "You're a project, you're a grown man and have mice living in your house; a garbage can," Heather Geier had said to him and laughed as he fell more and more to ruin.

He laughed too. It was funny, but for different reasons for everyone.

The worse he got, the more she felt he should have fixed himself. She saw no contradiction in that. She didn't see her

own scars from motorcycle wrecks and how hospital staff and medical technology had healed her instead of rebuking her for damage to the body others caused. But the *Cartesian* dualism of mind and body was so deep in the West that a man made insane -with damage to his brain from betrayal and over work and pain- was told to suck it up and heal himself before anyone would help.

His shrunken *seahorses of hemispheres* , his swollen *almonds of brain* , his *cytokines* attacking his dorsal horn were all invisible to the world -and that girl that had laughed in his face- and so his injuries went unaddressed as he fell more and more apart and was more and more infected by the malady as it spread to the heart.

He felt saliva on his hand, warm breath on his face. He saw mothers -five mothers- laughing, no now it was only four that he counted left to right. He saw one mother -with black hair banded and satin- call her son, *daughter* and then whisper something to another woman and a man in the room. It was plush and redolent with antique furniture and tri-fold mirrors and end tables with one red book. The edges were gilt and they shone.

The walls were papered in an 18<sup>th</sup> century red and gold filigree and the floor was hard wood and smooth.

It was flanked with windows that let gauzy light in. And the man paced like an animal that was saddled with a suit of olive and black; a pendulum, a thing of wheels and weights. The inmate could see his face and it made his lip curl and his hands ache. And more and more bee stings came. He hated the view from down low, the view of a little boy or girl on the floor. *These eyes felt sick; the leading edge of some sickness inside* , he thought. And he saw now the mother was worried, despondent, guilty, wrought up. The father was staring at the young wife that was his and that he was also dungeoned inside.

He saw a blonde in the background doing her make-up, he saw her up on a counter Indian-sitting; pulling a lid down with one finger. A black pencil drew across the bottom lid, she a distal to this scene in the room that he felt more and more within.

“More,” he said. To what he had no idea.

The pencil was lettered in embossed writing; it was held by a chafed hand.

Bee stings, like corposants at the mast-top were feelings disguised as his thoughts; he felt words come and go in his mind -his mind in this child- hundreds of miles away. He stared at the glass between him and the world, and the map of the middle east.

The sea loomed in his mind as these childish thoughts of regulated sweets and emerging agency and folds in the hands squeezed and captivated him. *Mare Liberum* , he saw scrawled on the bulkhead to a ship traveling at 14-knots between *Berbera* at the apex of *Hargeisa* and *Burco* roads, and *Aden* down from *Lahij* across the mouth of the wrench. He saw cities like teeth of that off-set plumbing wrench again; and *Sudan* and *Eritrea* as the handle as he wondered what was in these ships, these copper pipes of the water-wall of the world.

His mind toggled back and forth between the landmass of the earth, the expanse of the gulf, and these children and the increasing stinging that went on as instigation to thoughts he'd chase like a toddler stumbles after a butterfly with a net.

The girl who had abandoned him faded away as thoughts like this came and went as if in a waking dream.

“That is all you must imagine, at first,” he spoke as the words came to him while the images remained on the glass as if trapped; as the stinging dampened and the visions of

children darkened and too went away. "Imagine having your fill of swallowing your words, of avoiding an argument, of agreeing with someone who is out to harm you, humiliate you, destroy you. Imagine you finally tire of being disrespected. Imagine one day you reach some limit and decide to be, for once, a man who says, *no* .

"That is all you must imagine, that is all," the inmate said again as the Plexiglas scattered the image of the sea lanes and checkpoints and landmass and the brothers' eyes locked and the words floated by not just the older brother, but too past the prison personnel who listened on the other end. Each call -rare as they were- was monitored both by recording it and staff listening in real time. He thought for a second of the moment when he had first heard of the *United States penitentiary administrative maximum* facility here in Florence. It was where they sent people the government were most angry with; it was the 9<sup>th</sup> level to Hell. The most famous, the most dangerous, the ones that the President or the Attorney General or the public hated the most.

It was personal, mostly it was personal.

If you wound up at ADX it was because you were on somebody's shit list. He remembered knowing this before he'd taken one life on his list.

He had spent the first three years -as was policy- on lockdown. But now he was able to have one phone call a year. He thought of how he had asked to be sent here; *not in so many words*, he thought. *But, the way a man asks for it*, he thought, *when he's asking for it* . He smirked as he thought of the judge in chambers, his own performance -his speech- and as he thought of this he spoke -to his brother- from some other stream that too was rushing to the common ocean of all these ideas.

"You will never be asked to *do* it, to act upon it; I promise. You will only be asked to imagine what it might be like to

stand up for yourself and stand in solidarity with the people you admire and the tribe you belong to, and the ideals that burn like a *Promethean* fire in your belly. That is all, just imagine. And then turn away and live a long life, full of petty -and acceptable- indignities and then call it good; a good life. But call it good with a small memory of a man who chose to honor *his* idea of the good life too. Once a year, for just a moment, like a quiet remembrance of an event the youth have all forgotten; like the last soldier in a war three wars ago,” he said as Travis’ face appeared in the glass and so too did his own; each face a ghost due to the reflection and bad lighting and the angle of each set of eyes. Each man there now as the map to the *Sinai* faded, the voices of children died down, the girl that had crushed last and most harshly merely heather grey no longer a name.

“Light a candle in the mind, and then blow it out,” inmate 16180339 said and pursed his lips and rose the brow in a furrow and the top lip just a bit.

The bee stings of all those incoming thoughts had annoyed him and so he now thought of the two -well, three- reasons he had come here -wanted to come here- in the first place. It was small -the smallest of all prisons, it had less than five-hundred inmates- and it was soundproof. It was a unique quiet which he desired above all else. Most jails and prisons were loud but not ADX. *The second reason was medical*, he thought as pleasure came from these victories he felt over the dumb brute of the system that he hunted. He refused to elaborate even to himself as the pain reduced enough to quiet his need for *braggadocio*. *And the final, the third, reason*, he began to think as his brother finally answered him through the phone and the inmate’s head filled with that noise -clear but robotic through the round plastic of the receiver- that noise of his brother filling it instead of his own thoughts -thoughts on the third reason- thoughts that he was locked in with most closely now.



Thoughts of a third reason he did not think.

His brother's voice dominated his head with just the sound of one word.

"Ok," the brother said with a mouth tied to a mind itself sparking with contradictions of what had been said and what the men in the laboratory had told him years ago. He listened with no plan for retention, a balance designed to balm in the moment but not betray in the future. Lyndon nodded and as he watched his brother's face and saw the lack of conviction, he too forgot all about the third *rationale* .

The stinging thoughts went away.

His mind populated with a line inside him coiled and dark and discreetly outlined, the border of letters hard and black and white; like a face in incoming clouds; clouds he saw above the accreting mountains that he felt magnetically from the prison itself. His own vision was the directional north, his own heart the magnet, his mind's plotting the arrow to the round compass which pulled the ever-improving eyes. In ADX the walls had been made tall enough to obscure the peaks so that each inmate would not know what direction they faced. The eastern and western abutting of plates -made of rock rising and then leading-edge weathering away as it gathered unto itself afternoon storms- had the ability to orient man quickly and easily.

Thus, the prison of man was forced to take that away.

"Time, MacLeod," the guard barked as Lyndon hung up the phone.

He held a kite in his plan, he stood up and squeezed his ass and its metal borders pressed against his rectum; the kite was made of rough toilet paper; the letters were a code of three he used; twelve books of the Bible, twelve mathematical equations, and the third was equal parts The

Whale and one line from Aristotle that he thought might be safe from everyone else:

*The soul of man may be divided into two parts; that which has reason in itself, and that which hath not, but is capable of obeying its dictates.* [Book VII; 333a]

Isaiah squeezed his hands around the rock in one and nothing -nothing that he imaged too to have borders- in the other and watched the AV feed of the meeting between the brothers.

The audio and images all ran into the lab and upon the screens.

Too he monitored each clone -some at play, some asleep, some thinking some dreaming- as their feelings dropped like eroding shoreline into the sea of the inmate's own mind, each lapping wave of his tumult of an inner and watery world, each ebb slow, each undertow, each storm surge that came now and then, each feeling, jealousy, each angst and outrage, every elation and distortion and mutation, all longings and fear of things large and small funneled into the inmate more and more.

Their -the clone's- pain -grain by grain- fell into his inner harbor and sank to the bottom from shore to layer by layer of his shallow here and deep there waters; at bottom building a calcareous layer in him. 1.6 million copies both causing and receiving -effecting and relieving- pain in valence with his -perfected suited- and multiplied by each moment in each day -and each night- for as long as they were to be alive.

Isaiah watched it all -tweaking the signaling to reduce the interference of his plans in the Gulf of Aden with the transmissions from the clones to the inmate- and as he erased memory of the maps that the inmate had seen and loaded new algorithms onto the inmate's coder to reduce

confusion, he watched Travis leave ADX. He figured the inmate would just think he was going more and more insane; the strange images and data from disparate things unrelated would just seem like his own mind coming apart. *And plus he wouldn't really remember much at all* , Isaiah thought.

Isaiah reset the coders in each clone and the inmate and then he thought more and more of the star system 575 light years out in space.

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

She didn't like driving east. But Jack Four -*Lyngvi* now- was in no mood to coddle her or ask. She was going with them to the shipyard, and her opinion wouldn't mean shit until they reached land on the other side of the sea.

*Her kingdom was overseas*, he used to say. And until then she was his charge but that he was *in* charge and that was fucking that. Her belly felt stuffed all the time, and it made food and water seem like a threat. Even the air seemed too heavy to take in, so distended was the belly and tits. She thought of the tattoo on the back of her neck.

The road was empty and black as the drone flew overhead clearing their way. So many people had already fled; just where, she did not inquire. Made mad by the pain in the jaw, in the face, just inside the passages of the nose, people had been unable to focus on anything but that pain on the prow of their own ship, that pulpit of the beak and cheeks and jutting jaw. It was hard to imagine hundreds of millions of people going insane from pain, and now the coasts being inundated with these giant waves.

But she need not imagine it, she had foreseen it -of course- but that vision was in her head, *and this shit*, she thought, *was in the world*.

“Ah, the world,” she said as if each word was linked to the next, as if one breath animated it all.

She fell asleep with her head against the 2-inch thick glass of the heavy armored door. The H1's road noise was tamped down and she felt merely a hum in her inner ear. She heard herself tell her dolls stories of the Battle of Manassas and tell the horses they would be called *chargers* for Bull Run by the Yankees, and that the whale ships of New Bedford would be sunk by the *Shenandoah* and assaulted by the *Alabama* and dozens would in fact burn.

In hypnogogic state she half dreamed half remembered from when she was seven and one half and she -and the dream- had held her old dolls that Blax had made for her; she and the dream said now in a fugue:

*Horsey de Mongol, Queen mare of Scot, the whaling ships of the Yankee north would take flight from the flag and register with foreign nations to avoid losing their capital in another war; this one in 1861. Horsey now you listen to me, these were Alexander Hamilton's men, and yet the banks would call in loans when the whalers could find no insurance in times of war.*

*Kerosene -my dear horsey- was the new fuel more and more and the whale men used ships to hunt old blubber less and less. And profits lowered like boats or sank like those stove and the men turned from whales in their restive dreams. They dreamed like you horsey, they slept like our papa: on their banks as if in coffins or their berths.*

*Now my dear mares gather round your Queen and listen of the Stone Fleet out of New Bedford with twenty-two ships of New England -whaleships- and one a New York merchant vessel in bleak shape. Gideon Wells -the secretary of the Union Navy- had bought up ships no longer profitable to hunt the leviathan, and so they were*

*to be larded with granite as blue as your mommy's eyes  
and as veined as her chest covered in thin white flesh.*

*They took and scraped and sold off anything of value  
and painted 'Fiji ports' on the sides to mimic man o ' wars.  
They ran so low in the water they seemed a skiff,  
and the crew was as few as the bones in a shark's fin.*

*Sir Samuel Du Pont said in voice and letter to Assistant  
Sec. Gustavus V. Fox as the insurgents thought a Union  
invasion was thus commenced:*

To Savannah we go! With 7,500 tons of cargo, with  
no malice -almost no malice- in our Yankee hearts we  
mean to finish this war we did not start! The cannon  
do not exist, subterfuge is our Trojan gift, we shall do  
one of two things! We shall sink our craft up to their  
masts in the Georgia harbor or make the Rebs do it  
themselves to impede our advance!

*You see my dear foals and mares -while you may not  
care- the eyes of predatory classes of beasts watched  
the sinking of the Stone Fleet with shock and uncertain  
awe. Only the Robin Hood was moored on a vulgar shoal,  
all the other former working-class ships were buried by  
the waters that day in December of 1861.*

*The Robin Hood was beached as if on the back of a  
whale itself, and the northerners piled up sails torn from  
the other ships and lines cut and wood pried up and the  
whole thing was then set ablaze.*

*Oh, what melancholy, what melancholy my chariots -my  
charges- my ladies of the Mongolian plain! To see ships -  
as the paper of record put it- be used such a way made  
even pragmatic men declare in print:*

Who could help but feel melancholy at the reflection  
that the poor old vessels, which had traversed so  
many thousands of miles of ocean, safely carrying

human beings amid Pacific calms and Arctic colds through long years of dreary tedious whaling voyages were to be relentlessly destroyed? The fortunes of the Tabers... Swifts, Coffins and Starbucks and many other New England families have been created from such their voyages.

*Notice -my mares- the final note -a look away- to take a moment to feel for the working-class ships if not the sailors of the day.*

*And in the end the harbor was blockaded and the Rebels vowed revenge, and General Lee would decry this type of warfare as tantamount to plucking the sun from the sky, in order to deny one's enemy the light. And the Author said, he scudded 'round the Horn in one, two years after the damage done. The back and forth between North and South had just begun. Listen up my - eye on either side- heads and tails of animals, in response to this the President of the Confederacy had the British build a dozen ships to fight the Union with.*

*And none were more feared than the Alabama and the Shenandoah at the edge of the age of sail.*

In the dream -with her former mares maned with elk hair tied to her hips and waist- in her dream -as the convoy of armored H1's full of *Lyngvi's* tribe of men that scared her and made her feel cold, and almost miss Blax; trucks that ran at 110 mph toward the coast- in her dream she was already afloat. In the dream she was at midship with the try-pots behind her, the rendered fat smell pulling to stern, the shadows of the crew lay down like Plato's on the deck. In her dream she saw and heard it said:

*Lightning off the starboard bow was blue and brachial and it made the black sky appear as a lung riven with arms and fingers and nails; it made it appear as if swallowing as much as it wanted of her own electric air.*

## 25.92 Hamlet's Mill

A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time

Isaiah 60:22 [King James Bible]

And so when the Anunnaki toiling in the gold mines mutinied and said "no more!" it was he who realized that his needed manpower could be obtained by jumping the gun on evolution through genetic engineering; and thus did the Adam (literally, "he of the Earth," *Earthling*) come into being. As a hybrid, the Adam could not procreate; the events echoed in the biblical tale of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden record the second genetic manipulation by Enki that added the extra chromosomal genes needed for sexual procreation. And when Mankind, proliferating, did not turn out the way it had been envisaged, it was he, Enki, who defied his brother Enlil's plan to let Mankind perish in the Deluge

The Lost Book Of Enki [Sitchin, Zecharia]

"You and I know that this is the real Truth about how the world began." He said this after centuries of Christendom, never doubting, for the essence of the rune was an incantation, sung, or murmured, which brings things back to their actual beginnings, to "deep origins." To heal a wound from a sword, the *laulaja* had to sing the rune of the "origin of iron" and one wrong word would have ruined its power. In this way fragments of ageless antiquity remained embedded in living folk poetry. Those whom the Greeks called the "nameless ones" *typhòs anēter*, who had preserved the epic rhapsodies, reach out to meet us almost in our days, in those humble villages of the Far North, their names of our own time

Hamlet's Mill [Santillana, Giorgio; Dechend, Hertha Von]

### **I. 2040 e.v.**

The choppers ran out front of the pack like a bonze prow; the metal was ashen and ferric and covered in both dust and oil and the scales of lizards with bronze age patina, the red burst of mosquitos with six types of blood and feathers of small lampen-black & dousing-blue birds.

The noise of the V-Twins ran behind them like shadow and glare as the H1's behind them watched the road ahead of themselves and the motorcycles.

The rode in a delta and took up both lanes of road. The grader and dozers and backhoes had removed all remaining abandoned cars months ago and the virus had kept everyone left indoors and off the roads. The *Wolves* had lit up cars and trucks from Aguilar exit -both north and south- in the early weeks of winter and set off bombs on the road at Trinidad and Pueblo that damaged the asphalt and concrete so badly that each vehicle was a sitting duck when they approached and slowed down.

The police hadn't responded to the robberies and pilfering early in 2039 and by now they either didn't exist or ran private security for the gang's partners in town and across the New Mexico border. *Matthias'* cousins set up in the Trinidad police station on main street and handled local complaints if anyone called. The petty criminals that had swollen and infected the town since 2015 had been executed or indentured to run supplies for the *Wolves*.

With the virus the streets were empty and the phone never rang. People died in their homes and policed themselves with shotguns and carbines if they came outside with symptoms of the second of the modified virus that attacked specific DNA. Mexicans died first, and most of the children from Anglos that had interbred. Men with less than 72% R1b DNA sickened and suffered, Neanderthal DNA of 4% or more inoculated 1,080 men in the town that was once over 12,000.

Travel between the southern state five miles from the port of entry to Colorado had been shut down by all except convoys ran by the *Wolves*. Movement from north of Pueblo had suffered the same fate. The national guard was dispersed to Colorado Springs as a bulwark, Denver as motte and anything west of Glenwood Springs were on their own.



The *Wolves* even controlled the air with the *nanobots* that would shear off the rotary blades of helicopters and drill holes in the fuselages of fixed-wing aircraft.

“Five clicks,” *Paul* said into his headset as they had turned off their DMs and gone out over the air on a secure channel.

He missed riding point, but he needed to run the Hummer to keep everyone on task. He allowed his brother to ride his Dyna and the brother of *Baldr* to drag tail.

Jack Four rode second, aft and starboard to *Matthias’*, his copper chop with forward controls and dragbars and a 12g slid into a leather holster over the velocity stack -shaped like a foghorn- that was made of Egyptian gold. He let his *bots* read the road for divots and fissures and had a heads-up display that allowed him to slalom effortlessly along the oft-damaged blacktop of I25 north.

He felt the wind on his chest and neck more than the men with baggers. He told them their farings were like *stuns’l* and that their bikes had more sheet metal than a one-ton Dodge diesel he’d once owned. They howled in protest and threw beer cans at him and told him they weren’t going to help him get anymore *boyfriends* as they all laughed and shook their heads and the Wreck grabbed the thrown beers off the ground to down them one-by-one.

But the wind did beat Jack Four to shit on these long rides.

“Copy that,” he said as he accelerated to *Matthias’* flank and signaled they were coming up on the location in along the plain in which they’d pull over and let the convoy carry on without them. *Matthias’* dreads looked like age-of-sail rigging and Viking lashings; his arms were vascular and blackened with 40-weight oil and tattoos of men and gods and runes from *Elder Futhark*; his visage was occluded by a beard seasons old and greying like lightning strikes against a late summer sky with no moon nor city around.

*Matthias'* upshifted into 7<sup>th</sup> gear and accelerated to 120mph with his suicide shift and let up off the clutch as he turned his head to watch the hand signals from the shaman on his right.

Jack Four made eye contact and his left hand lowered to his knee then raised like a black bird and bent two fingers forward like a beak.

Matthias nodded and tapped his left leg with his left hand as the *Wolves* behind him sent the signal down the line. Cars bent and broken and oblique to the median -or well off the road- were passed at speed that made them seem like chipped and geometric boulders or buffalo bones with grass growing up through the ribs. The *bots* kept the wind off the ears and so they could ride in silence with only the noise of the descending staccato of the short-pipes; ceramic coated and blackened further with blue flames spitting out like searching tongues of reticulated pythons facing the south.

Jack Four dropped back into formation and tapped his headset as Paul -nursing a wound to his arm- told the driver to speed up. The center ghost-grey Mercedes GLE -holding the new Governor and his two-man detail- was in between the six trucks like the light yolk to a dark egg. Sunset was in 15 minutes and Denver was 108 miles away.

The fires of New Mexico backlit them like the orange glow of a southern sunset as the choppers moved like an imbricate snake, lacing between each other in formation; a zipped snake-skin boot. They moved to the side of the open highway as the phalanx of up-armored trucks passed them with the diesels as quiet as electric engines.

The crossover Mercedes barely seen -like the pot to a card game at center to four players at each cardinal direction- as each truck moved around and between to protect the flop, turn and river card.

The constellations of *Sirius* and *Polaris* were faint but straight ahead in this the last year on the calendar that the *Mayan's* inherited from the *Olmecs*. The crescent moon at a faint glow of earthshine that gave it a white shadow and a hue like ghost above with the red body of Mars and a cold Venus dipping just out of view as the *Wolves of Vinland* let each constellation and satellite and planet populate their star-maps and orient them like astronomers in temples of old well beyond the old.

## **II. 2021 e.v.**

The room's fireplace had been lit; the gas line ran up and into the old Victorian style hearth.

The glass had been removed, the flames built a pyramid of sorts; high at center, almost circular so deep was the pit. Its warmth seemed to reach only her ankles and she pressed the child's hands to feel if hers -or her own- felt cool or warm.

To the child she said:

I know one in four at least, maybe more; maybe likely two in three who as girl not yet seen, six abused by sibling, uncles or step-fathers. Seven brides for seven brothers. That is bad enough dear Valance. First is shame and flailing out-of-balance; a girl spinning apart like stars; boys come and act phony at the age of matrimony.

They will crush your heart when its you -from the start- bruised and breaking and thrice bleeding; they're offended by what bear repeating: you were not protected but ruined by men here or absent both. You'll make no mention of the climax nor masturbation, you barely understand your infatuation with all things closest to death. You'll bond with brother and then think of

murder; your own character bends like a toy, billows like the sails of *Menelaus'* ships outward bound for Troy.

She gathers up white sheets like toga, as Helen, how so much gauze on a wound.

The half-breed between Nephilim and *the daughters of men* have swarmed the *Sika* ; like ants on a scorpion.

It's more than Scythian gold buried in the mounds around the Black Sea. It's the caste system and the large fathers of all children. Slavery ended in letter and thus began in God's sentence upon us all.

On the bar-top of the dresser the *Bhagavad Gita* was open - the books piled not on top but edge to edge- and the words rose up like smoke or steam, like locusts in Rachel's ears as her daughter laced her fingers now and stared in the dim room; her blue eyes perfectly adapted for low light. It said:

*Out of the corruption of women precedes the confusion of castes; out of the confusion of castes precedes the loss of memory; out of the loss of memory precedes the loss of understanding; and out of this all evil...*

The paper slips, bookmarks made of margins that arrived with this book and The Whale, had the words of King Darius of Persia, highlighted, "*I am Aryan, having Aryan lineage .*"

*"The Heracleopean King lectures his son that a civil war within Egypt permitted foreigners to enter ,"* was written on a foxed page torn on one edge; straight on the others.

She saw swastikas and sun wheels in the dust of the crepuscular light like arrows that shaded the Spartans in the gap. She heard chants in Nordic moans, bells of Tibet. Wind outside sounded like whispered threats, the fans inside went on and on overhead.

She counted the blades of five and five again.

Her breasts felt heavy with milk.

*A feedback loop of bad breeding and raping and marriages that fail like democracy. It's a warm ocean and a hurricane; it's a landfall and no mountains to push back on the retrograde spin of water and air and total disrepair , she thought and saw her baby thought it too.*

"Despair," she said aloud. She hurt all over, from heart to perineum; from big toe to cranium.

*It's just the black eyes of girls gone mean, the blood-shot eyes of boys made weak. It's endless failures of relationships -the thing most human of human beings- while ideas, ideas, ideas mate and procreate like cicada . And society was ruined before it was built, the war to the knife, the knife to the hilt , she thought and looked out the window and saw just street lights and no sky. She had made a series of origami cicadae out of old love notes and grocery lists she'd saved and put in drawers; made them of single sheets then began to make them more ornately by using several pieces of paper; each one she kissed and blessed and named for her girl. They hanged above her crib but the baby had not slept in that thing once;*

Valance was in bed with her and her and him each night.

"It built buildings already falling down," she said aloud. Then she read:

*Helen shifted her position, for the first time in hours. And she looked into his eyes. The Oarsmen looked up at him too; they forgot to row.*

*"Menelaos," she said, "you should have offered sacrifices. There is something very strange about this boat."*

*"On the contrary," he replied, "the boat is perhaps the only thing here which is beyond criticism. The wind is unfavorable, but the men row well, except when you distract them."*

*"In Troy at this moment, or somewhere along the shore," she said, "Agamemnon offers up prayers which I dare say will be effective; he will doubtless reach home. Our own prospects seem to me uncertain. You know my point of view; I have no love for adventure unless I know where I am going."*

*"We are going to Sparta," he said.*

*"I fear we are not," Helen said.*

Rachel read aloud to the baby as she continued to kick a bit in her swaddled feet and shawl; the shoes were a suede of Etruscan blue. Her hands held Rachel's black hair with just a few natural blonde strands laying in the newborn's creases and folds; like hay, wheat, gold.

Rachel paused and read silently along the margins of Book II of the old myth, the old history, sent. It was gold and gilt with a single scarlet ribbon:

*He in the end decided to send a lying dream to King Agamemnon .*

The King James -black clad in its second binding- lay open too on the table-top of the chest-of-drawers, open to First Kings 22:22. The leaves fluttered and rolled like shore sand under ebb and flow as people below in the Governor's mansion opened and closed egress doors and windows and transoms.

She deciphered each noise like detective.

Rachel thought more of how she had been untouched. Her skin seemed brittle. She read the margins to distract herself from her own thoughts of lack. She turned the head a quarter turn and the book a quarter back. She read the periphery of the story instead the body; the main; the stated plain. She read aloud of Helen of Troy, once of Sparta, to young Valance to clear her mind and weave both thoughts and spoken words like a plait, a braid, a helix of

DNA, so that the baby girl would, she thought, *imbibe the medicine and the mead , the lesson for now as mere seed .*

*I have gone only a bit further than the rest of you. But I have news to tell: I have found grapevines*

Rachels' lap seemed wide -as she read rapidly in mind this line from *Tyrkir* in the *Grænlendinga Saga* - and as if her hips had made a cobra of her bottom -lower- half; the child sat as if in the Greek ship itself, and mother imagined her daughter grown and tattooed black like poetry of war and vessel pottery of red enveloped by *Grecian* forms, muscled and striated, and as dark as the horns of bulls; beaks of crows. She imagined she'd read a story each day until Valance was taken away. *I know the child cannot stay* , she thought but she did not want to know when or how.

And just then she felt the streaks of tears end at her chin and land upon the babe's tow-headed crown as it turned toward the flames.

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

The drill churned.

The shavings came off the bit like coiled springs and slivers from a golden bough. He held the kelly as it shook and moved down under the weight of the string and the softness of the noble metal.

The sun glint against first the moon, then the bowsprit and the sailors of dusky hues. The first mate lit the try pots and the *bosun* lashed together nine oarsmen to their copper rowlocks before calling out to *Lyngvi* once more.

*Lyngvi* had ignored him as the sound of the kelly moved through his ears like asps and the vibration under his feet rose up and the hum in his hand moved toward his outboard heart. A bronze cage had seemed to have been fastened to

his leather monkey-jacket and inside it beat the 6-valved heart. It was covered in white feathers and the blood was as black as the god of war. He felt all uncontained and yet restrained.

"Hold fast," he bellowed below to the men in the rigging and the deckhands moving the capstan down and to the right.

"Anchorage," boomed the second mate, and the third mate entered the Captain's cabin at once.

The water whirled in the North Sea above *Hegalandia* and hemmed in by the three islands of *Vast*, *Lofor*, and *Roit*. The spray of the gold and the seawater sprung up to the crows' nest and *Lyngvi* closed his eyes as *spectres* of seabeasts made up of Persian rugs and seaweed and ghostly leviathan with mechanical hands hovered half in and half out of the water being pulled in by the *Horrenda Caribdis* as it spun under the stoic manner of *Vainamoinen's* red ship.

"Hold fast," he whispered to his heart as the seawater desiccated it and made it spark at each valve.

"Did we not sing where the *hugruna*?" the *Valkyrias* said each single syllable behind like shadow to words in sentences of words that made shapes of heads of swallows and backs of geese and tongues of reindeer and the horn of mammoth from the age before the deluge and the swamping of the coasts.

*Ilmarinen* hammered at the forge down below and it rang like brass bells with iron striker.

#### **IV. 2040 e.v.**

The Bust watched the ship navigate the channel -sails like wings, oars like feet- at *Timaru* and the *M ā ori* King's emissary sat across from her with bundled sticks as he tied



the last knot of the birthing blanket around her last daughter of the day.

*"They are a nation hardy in toils and warfare ,"* she said, quoting *Trogus* , with her mouth pointed down to the girl-child, her eyes rolled up toward the Polynesian seraphim. *"Their strength of body extraordinary, they take possession of nothing which they fear to lose and covet -when they are conquerors- nothing save glory ,* Trogus Pompeius wrote in the time between two deluge," she added.

The thumb cymbals rattled and the chimes tingled around their heads and the oil lamps made shadows elongate on the deck. They curved like steppe-bows at their feet; the child's ice-wine eyes would be darkened by the penumbra laid at Valance's shoulder and the shawl and then lit up by the moon as the *tops'ls* and *t'gallants* moved out toward the sea.

"The child will be kept from the sun if you want her to keep blue eyes like sky instead of sea," the King's emissary said as the Bust ignored him.

She had let *Lyngvi* tattoo the *Yggdrasil* and its three roots on her forearm one night after they had lain down for the hours of the vernal storms. They had not gone ashore with the expeditionary crew but stayed with the cook and the Captain's logs and barrels of wine and lard. She had drawn lines of the cosmos on her small blackboard; connecting stars with white lines of chalk and made dust of crushed shells from her galvanized steel pail.

Valance collected the rags *Lyngvi* used to wipe the blood away. She folded them and used them to pad her bra and around her hips and waist.

She thought of the amber medallions in her berth and the cicada of her dreams from age three. She still folded paper sometimes but each one turned into a dragon.

Isaiah had given her one from the 9<sup>th</sup> century a.e.v. and she had built a mold of hot resin 2cm deep. She had vivisected the winged creatures and dissolved the heart in her blue and grey solution of HCl, concentrated nitric acid -HNO<sup>3</sup> - in a ration three to one.

## **V. 444,000 a.e.v.**

He was summoned by his master who wore the seabeast about the head and carried the bag into the temple.

He touched his own head as the head of the master was covered by the scales. The memory of the Great Wind, the dry heat, the boiling of blood, remained in his head; his fore. His head was hybrid, shrunken compared to the gods; but still high of brow. His hands would not cover what the fish had on land.

He ignored the wounds and wandered into the forest to collect wood, twigs, mosses. Time did not seem like time, but rather, like space that he traversed and in that space of time he came upon a Whirlwind, a machine, a thing of brazen bulls, burnished brass. It was staffed by emissaries of En.ki and they spoke:

*The Land of Magan, on an island mottled by the river of Magan where the sluiceways are, is where you must go. You are blessed as we are tasked; come.*

And as the copper men said this, the *Eridu* -the hybrid man-fell asleep and was placed into the craft, the fiery chariot. And yet asleep, the *Eridu* saw the waters, the face of the earth, and the lands of black and tan; the plains and the high places white above tree line, and it did not occur to the *Eridu* to look above to the vault and scan for rocks and mountains and sluiceways above as below.

As he saw with his eyes, his mind left him and it all but a dream occurred out of order, like swamps in deserts, like

roots hanging from the boughs of old trees; crows landlocked, wolves with wings.

“Endubsar,” the voice said, in a boom, like a crack of doom, like a coughing fit of two drunken gods, “offspring of *Adapa*, I have chosen you to be my scribe.”

Before the *Eridu* the table appeared, the enclosure glowed, the walls were long to the east and west, one third to the north and south. Stones of grey on the table, a stool of dark metal, and one stylus of copper or gold or something unknown gleamed in the absence of wells of ink. It too gleamed and glowed and held a sun of the Far-away in its surface when the *Eridu* moved his own head and eyes. He heard and inscribed:

*Endubsar, son of Eridu City, my faithful servant, I am your lord En.ki. I have summoned you to write down my words, for I am much distraught by what has befallen mankind by the Great Calamity. It is my wish to record the true course of the events, to let gods and men alike know that my hands are clean. Not since the Great Deluge had such a calamity befallen the Earth and the gods and earthlings. But the Great Deluge was destined to happen, not so the Great Calamity. This one, seven years ago, need not have happened. It could have been prevented, and I, En.ki, did all I could to prevent; alas I failed. And was it fate or destiny? In the future it shall be judged, for at the end of days the Day of Judgement there shall be. On that day the Earth shall quake and the rivers shall change course, and there shall be darkness at noon...*

The lord En.ki spoke of this for hours and lines went on for miles and the *Eridu* never tired.

En.ki reminded the *Eridu* of the maxim of the gods and the Anunnaki, *that the true account of the Beginnings and of the*

*Prior Times and of the Olden Times would be told, for the in the past the future lies hidden.*

And the *Eridu* held the metal stylus and let only the ear bones move.

And the wine was gold and the bread too; as the *Eridu* began to speak:

*I see a stylus of eagle tip, stones of lapis lazuli, faces smooth as my lord's women, expression like the guards that surround the aperture to the lord's rooms.*

En.ki said:

*Do not deiate from my words and utterances...*

And after times measured in four tens, and without food besides the first golden wine and bread, the *Eridu* awoke in a field outside the city of *Eridu* . A piece of flattened reed was in his hand, torn from the tablets' covers, and the man - as the names of Noah and *Ziusudra* catalogued in his ears like a burrowing bee in left and a flying ant in the right- read it even as the letters were backwards:

*Now this is the account of how survival on Earth was restored,*

*And how a new source of gold and other Earthlings beyond the oceans were found.*

*It was after the encounter at Arrata that the waters of the Deluge to recede continued,*

*And the face of the earth gradually from under the waters was showing.*

*The mountianland was mostly unscathed, but the valleys under mud and silt were buried...*

## 26. Quart of Blood

When you plant or bury a hero in his field, a crop of heroes is sure to spring up

A Plea for Captain John Brown [Thoreau, Henry D]

Others, craven-hearted, said disparagingly, that "he threw his life away," because he resisted the government. Which way have they thrown their lives, pray? Such as would praise a man for attacking singly an ordinary band of thieves and murders. I hear another ask, Yankee-like, "what did he gain of it?" as if he expected to fill his pockets by this enterprise

*Ibid*

Bulloch avoided this outcome by exploiting a loophole in the law. Although it was clearly illegal for a British shipyard single-handedly to build, arm and outfit a warship for a belligerent, it was perfectly legal -according to the lawyers- to have all these acts be performed by different vendors; the key was keeping the elements of the enterprise separate from one another and that is exactly what Bulloch did

Leviathan [Dolin, Eric J]

## **I. 2040 e.v.**

The Bust sat upon the taffrail and the moon lay upon only her and a small triangle of the deck; the clouds a keyhole, the albedo weak tonight east of Magnetic Island.

Her belly was taut. Her mind was loose with the waves. No birds had come in several days.

*Lyngvi* tumbled -between thumb and fore- an error-coin from the cache below. It had a hole punched in it at the five o'clock. It had markings in Olde English, it was black in each pore from the smelted ore. It toppled over and over as he stared at the back of her and all her *accoutrement* . Her bronze broadheads caught the edge of light, her quiver a cylinder like slash across her back. Her hair was longer than ever before and laid down like ravens in huddled sleep.

He picked the flotsam and jetsam -the short-feathers from albatross and deck-straw and hitchhikers that came from shore- from her hair when she allowed it. She hadn't permitted his touch in three days.

Eric-the-Bloodaxe *had been paid to allow the mercenary and poet and drunkard Skallagrímsson to live on after being taken captive subsequent to a shipwreck on Putnam shore* , he thought as he stared up at the rigging to see the wind-direction. A poem was written in *drápa* and Isaiah had sent it to the main hub -the wheel- of *Lot 45* .

Jack had pilfered it:

My mother wants a price paid to purchase my proud-  
oared ship

Standing high in the stern I'll scour for plunder

The *standa Vikingum* , steersmen of this shining vessel  
says:

*Then home to harbor after hewing down a man or  
two...*

He saw the words for the hundredth time, he heard each syllable, each pause, each breath, each raising of the pen. He made patchwork quilt of such stolen things. He counted both letters and words.

But the words did not slake. He refused to think what he'd be forced to say, if asked. His pride had often been what was sought and not what was found, he -when the King was speaking- bowed. But, he had no mother to barter for him, no foundering yet to place him at the mercy of the Rex. He was somehow -he thought- *between the waves and some particle, some thing, some part or parcel. I have time to navigate still. Once we reach the ends of the earth, I'll bloom, I'll rise. In the mountains of my father I'd have died, somehow I'd never have survived.*

He watched her from the quarterdeck -his eyes upon her were taken for granted now as he'd oriented toward her since America- and then she noticed his footfalls -his particular trod- as he traversed the deck and made a big show of going up to relieve the Cooper in the nest. The Captain had made mention of *sup* in his cabin before the sun set, but she had no use for company nor food.

Her fixed- blade tanto was sheathed on her hip, her nails were chaffed at the quick. Her eyes had gotten used to the black night and the green sea. The white of day still abraded.

“Valance,” she heard in her ear, but she did not turn. She pawed each bronze arrowhead about her waist, one by one by five. She imagined the threads and shanks, the X that they made. She kept her hands hidden about the middle and let the bow rest upon her back; the high-side to her four o’clock; the string invisible but its shadow on the deck so straight. She breathed deeply and felt her quiver press against her spine and *traps* ; and then a shadow of memory -his hands like a god’s upon her not that long ago- closed around her *lats* . She didn’t say his name, but mouthed it, and let the teeth grind at the end on the X in his legacy. She saw the sea from the ship, she heard her Blax breathe, she imagined she had wings.

She turned her PGC back on and knew it was the first mate - *Jarnefr* - who had spoke on this side of *Valhalla* and to dinner with the Captain she’d just been called.

## **II. 2037 e.v.**

Jack Two held his own hand in the one gone white and wrinkly from the rain.

The blood dripped between the fingers and the wind picked each drop up as it fell from the hand and bent it and broke it apart like scattering starlings.

He looked west as the sun had still left a white outline on the *Sangres* by which to guide himself. His coder was off-line from the fall and his head felt mushy and thick and capable of only looking at a mere 90-degrees of his fore. The eyes blinked and the ears -he now noticed- rang, and the mouth tasted of iron and salt. He spit blood and it too was carried by the wind in an arc.

He felt cold in seams on his body and knew his clothes must be ripped and leaking heat out and wind in.



He felt like kneeling but instead walked toward the flattest part of the landscape that he could see. The sun and moon were under the earth and the eyes were blurry and wet. He knew he ought not walk in these conditions and yet that's what he did.

He wanted to get home. He saw hot water in a bath, trash cans for his clothes that were nearly rags; he even imagined trimming his nails. *I want a drink*, he thought.

His knee buckled and it was a two-stage drop -first at the hip- then to the ground and he felt sand get pushed up his nose and into the cuts of the hand and the face. He'd decoupled his two hands -he'd been holding like cup and saucer- and then braced himself. Now the badly damaged hand was jammed like a turkey with dressing and grit up its ass.

"Fuck," he said aloud and each letter formed a hatchet with head and edge until it broke through a memory he'd kept as an egg in his *noggin'* for who knows how long. It all came open as he remembered the way he felt and the way she had smelt as they touched bellies and palms. He'd felt only the face and the chest of himself, not lower down, not his loins.

And for how long had that memory been larval in him, he wondered, how long had he nested her within, how long would he call it anything but what it was: love.

But then Blax -apparition of voice and *spectre* of form- knocked on his memory like the cops and his eyes watered the high-plains desert grit from his eyes, and the mouth opened and spittle and moaning came out. He tried to hold the thought back, as if the feeling was safer than the attending words. As if the feelings were domesticated, but words feral. As if the whole world was backwards from what he knew that is was.

“God,” he said and even that rattled him.

The eyes were useless in the dark of the mountain ravine. His ears ringing made echolocation harder, and everything smelled of his own blood and body odor now that he was in a ball on the ground. Like a darkened theater the house lights all around went down, and the screen of his inner vision flashed in white all at once. In his mind he saw Blax and the man spoke with a cadence compressed; each word was two words, each idea was full of conceit:

“None of that was said,” Blax alleged in rebuke to some unformed assertion by Jack.

“It was implied, it was implicit,” Jack Two said quickly and as the idea came online.

“I went to enormous effort to explain the nuances, the details, the caveats, the exceptions,” Blax said.

“I can’t argue with you,” Jack Two said. He knew what he felt, he knew that Blax appeared broken, riven, mangled, and hobbled. He shook in the wind, he shivered in rain, he bowed under weight of their work -in the garden with sacks of trimmings and thinnings in hand, or with quarter of mule deer over shoulder- he was soaked with that which never used to penetrate. Jack knew that each word of his Lt’s was punctuated and parenthetical and twisted on either end by pain that flew in from breezes or surfaced from trenches or starbursted in atomic moments regular but stochastic and odd. The rise and fall of the voice, the pinched ends -the truncated sentences as he moved an appendage or rubbed the neck- all conveyed a message beneath the endless - strafing, suppressing- words. Jack Two felt this, he did not think it; he too conspired to not put it in verbs as if this might slow it all down.

"But you sneak about, in the night -like a burglar- and it gets on my goddamn nerves," Blax said. He was accusing, lamenting, rebuking the boy for hiding his inner feelings from him like a *cache* -a treasure- buried by map.

"I do not," Jack protested -each word getting louder- in sentences shorter. And in his mind they were in a room sparse with an uneven floor, strange blocks stacked around like false walls. He felt like a child. He felt half, a quarter of his sixteen years. The room boomed and bounced like the throat of leviathan, like belly of the whale.

"You never say a word, you march off in the dark, set the perimeter, you let the snow collect on your folds," Blax said and then quieter, "in the fold of your clothes." He felt terrible for insulting Jack with the very things that proved he loved them, cared, worried. But Blax knew he was on to something, that Jack left to give watch because he was afraid of what he would reveal if he stayed. Jack was hiding all night and all day. Jack was guarding not them but himself.

"So?" Jack Two said with petulance and pique.

"Jack, don't make me drag it out. You always make it like pulling teeth," Blax said -his fists clinching, his jaw setting up like concrete- as Jack felt words catalyze and rise and froth in him all at once like an eruption of inflationary expanse. He spoke a battery of words he could not recall seconds later nor control right then, things with one and two and four syllables burst forth and with accents and invective and curses attending like cattle and horsemen and herding ranch-dogs. Blax stood stoically and darkened as Jack lost sight of him -the room bending so each man was farther apart- as Jack's words slowed to a gait that he could track.

“...and that’s just because of you. Of your whatever the fuck,” he said clumsily and tried to stretch his own neck to get his head and eyes on level with Blax. “And you press down on any impulse for romance and softness. You press down on all of us; with me at bottom. *Smart* this and *smart* that, *deny* this *deny* that. *Delay* this *delay* that. I don’t -shit, you don’t- we don’t know what it does to delay such things at our age. I can smell her, and it ain’t perfume, it ain’t anything man made, it ain’t *ambergris*,” he said as he thought it was ichor, the dander & feather of angels, the effluvium of phlogiston from seraphim left over from the second celestial wars.

“Goddammit, old man, I can smell her in language as long and piquant -as sonorous and frequent- as all that crap from the canon you quote. I taste her words, she sends them to me on the air and they get tangled up in the mane of God’s mare. I see her move in three places at once, I blink and see her for days and weeks and months. I,” he began again but paused. His lungs needed not air but time; not filled but spaced. He hesitated and felt his hands come up to his chest; heart.

“I touch her with more than hands. I touch ground where she lands, I clear a path and feather her nest. I seek out ways to make her life easier; more blessed. I give birth to phrases, sure, some bright lies, just for her eyes, I grind gears only she hears, I seek to allay her worst nine fears. But, I’m divided in three.

“And she fears us, she fears Jack,” he said of Jack Four in an overt hint. And Blax knew exactly what he meant.

“Jack,” Blax said as his hands too now rose, as the boy interrupted.

“No, we’ve heard enough, we’ve heard it all. Each way from Sunday -six ways from Sunday- whatever the fuck. You know what I mean. You’ve stomped on each reach

for whatever it is in a woman that ain't in a man," Jack waved his hand. He saw Blax blink and flinch and move back just an inch.

"No, no," Blax barked, protesting, frantic; moving closer now to the boy, his hands grasping like claws. His muscles tensed and blood flow increased, vascularity and capillary dilation made him ruddy and valved at neck, arm, and forehead.

"Yes, yes, you have. And you don't know the consequences, you don't know," Jack Two said inelegantly, as he too moved toward some middle between them, his coder made adjustments in his homeostatic and allostatic system and he seemed - outwardly unchanged- as he spoke. "You think you're so wise and mordant. So wised up. But now what? We're safe from women, as you plotted, but what now? What now? as we hold them out and away like the future, like a war that must be fought someday. Never today, never right now," Jack said.

"No," Blax said as his voice rose and sounded almost young and not quite a man's, a machine's, "I said life maybe ain't meant to be pragmatic, rational, maybe it's meant to be more than survival. I just said maybe love is a risk," Blax said -thinking of the 1% not the ninety-nine- as he was so close to Jack now his white teeth seemed foreign in their contrast. His beard greyer in more and more zones.

"You said that but just -only, merely- once in a million times as story after story of heartbreak and rending and betrayal came with each detail, each name, each Melannie and Sarah and Julee fucking Rae. You harped on each feature or each insult and how each wound never healed, you pulled up the shirt -down the pant and the sock- to show off each scar from each scare they

threw into you. Alexander at *Opis* daring your Generals and Captains to match scars as you berate them for loving their children for you have none of your own.

“Goddammit Blax, you told us each element of each starry woman, each affront, all the black to each time you collapsed on the floor. You drew chalk lines you had us watch pantomimes, you told us of each time you put the titanium revolver, the 1911, the shotgun in the mouth. We was told as we couldn’t even breathe so stuffed were our lungs with your *macabre* air,” Jack said as he thought of the bleak stories of Julee saying she preferred other men, her cheating on him at rock shows with a girl that ended up squatting in million dollar California homes; making the news in a full face of cosmetics; interviews with neighbors, strange and baroque details again and again.

*The ornate particulars, the tawdry details, the topography of each fucking female*, Jack thought. But he didn’t say Heather’s name, nor Alexandra, he had some class, he knew which names would wreck his ass.

“I said maybe risk was the point,” Blax objected again as Jack put his hand up to his Lt’s advancing chest yet needed no force to keep the old man at bay. He just held the hands there as if mere warning not actual blockade.

“You -LT- you said love was the *riskiest* of all,” Jack said with sadness, shame, pain, a kind of resignation to how long he had refused to love her based upon this incessant rogue’s gallery of horrible women paraded in front of them day after day for nearly three years. He - they all had- been taught self-defense not against men - the government- but women -the softer sex- as if inoculated against some malicious and remorseless disease.

Jack Two awoke on his feet -his hand sore but staunch- under the crescent moon that had rose and the white line of the range long gone. And he felt the dream -the fugue state- collapse into one man arguing with himself; each beast chasing its tail, each word reversed, each number a palindrome.

He had held his breath and now exhaled.

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

Isaiah held the black rock.

He felt its constituent parts -its facets and atoms- unfold like a plot to an alien tome.

"Fuck it," he said as he let the star map of *Kepler 186-foxtrot* grow in the mind; expand to a thousand times the size he'd kept it before; hidden; mere grain in a *Gedrosia* desert he feigned to cross.

He stared at it, and all around it.

The planet was blue as noon, purple as empyreal robe, silver as the tears of the hanged gods; and it was just over 10% the size of earth.

*It took the star's light 575 years to arrive -an adjustment of 75 years from the first calculations, about 7 years behind the second calculations- for it bent and took a detour of sorts*, Isaiah thought as he hid the equation. He calculated the light of a curved universe, he measured the way some photons arrived all at once. He -in his way- held the planet in his hand and felt it dewy like a scoop of soil and moss held together at iron core with ferric plate and mycelium like the soul and skeletal and cartilage structure of this organism of earth.

He watched the coins be dug up and loaded onto the ship, the hull bulge, the sea swell, the horizon sink, the sextant

adjust, the sailors grow grim about the brow. "The sails billow," he said.

He watched the old silver coinage stack like vertebrae; spine. He observed it as it sailed the ocean around the pole and down past Easter Island to New Zealand and he watched something follow them like a shadow so long it mapped the curve of the earth. "Bent black," he said.

He surveyed the *Cygnus* constellation now as a whole.

The sun -*Kepler 186* - had five planets, and its brightness magnitude was a mere 14.61. It was too dim for the naked human eye. A score of 6 or lower was needed for anyone but Isaiah and his eyes. He watched as the star shimmered and stabilized -wings flapped, tucked then outstretched- like one dot in a flock that he'd hunt over all else. The four planets besides his -*b*, *c*, *d*, and *e* - were all tidally locked and even his *f* was likely 4.11 billion years old and made of seas as heavy and cold as the inner blood of an interned King of the old north.

"The steppe was their summer, the arctic their winter; the millennia passed like seasons, their fathers like days, mothers like nights, brothers the hours made of minutes of children, alright?" he asked aloud of the air and ivy and birds and things that crawled even though they could -in fact- fly.

The planet's face would turn with the moons and the sun.

Its *Janus* nature would be hidden no matter the advancement of time or space, for they rotated in tandem, retrograde or random, it mattered not. They were cleaved.

It's mass -he calculated- would be at around 1.62M. This made it just over a third iron and two-thirds silicate rock. The atmosphere would be burning *H/He* off; just in time. But the clouds would be thick and muddled and he smiled as he



saw it rocky like flatirons, and foggy like *Devonshire* , and cold enough to slow down time.

*Orthogonality of the Hermite polynomials vis-à-vis the Gaussian distribution of this model appeared as the zero rose like a sun*, he thought. He thought this as the data came in like particle and wave from the sun that had sent them when the *Māori* were 440,000 strong in *Aotearoa* , when China was burning its boats, and when the silver error-coins of *Ericsson* had absorbed the photons -the very ones that he needed- exactly 582 years ago.

He looked at his own hands, the prints, the redness, the nails cracked and white tipped.

Men thought not of what was stored in what was stored. They thought of just the hordes. They thought the King's coins were of value -not their capacity to hold starlight, birthright, from before the immolation of the atmosphere- but in fungible -economic- worth. Isaiah held onyx in one hand and a thousand thousand things in the mind.

The *Hoer* horde, the *Cuerdale* horde, all buried for a doubling of the time of light from his *Kepler* star had held the blood and trace of his Norse, the fleeing families of unalloyed DNA. Hack and coin uncorrupted by the modern hand of archeologists; virgin ore. It was the coinage of *Skallagrimsson's* that he'd wanted, only touched by the hands of Jack Four. The light from the system's star had lay upon it 1,151 years ago; buried since then and unsullied by the sun's radiation or man's sloughing genetics in the helix of literal and symbolic ways and means.

The ashes of *Hekla* radio-dated it for Isaiah, and the ash preserved the bones of the forty-five.

But he had wanted most those *foss* -coins and Jack had gotten them for him. He thought of the burial site; the digging, the men and their hands, the spades and the way

the metal looked from above. He took measure of the air around the Wolf Tribe and the level of entheogens and nitrogen and ash too. He measured the way their brains sparked blue and clouded over with dopamine and bloomed like algae and stirred up fine sand. He saw them covet not the coins but the shine, the face of their god who would approve. Poet and warrior *Egil Skallagrímsson's* horde was the last and best of the epoch's hack-silver pressed into medallion; embossed with name of a King.

He saw threes and zeros and negative one shine and shimmer like outer stars; he saw black functions around the light integers:

$H_n(x)$  and  $He_n(x)$ .  $N = 0, 1, 2, 3...$

He looked at it longingly, as he assembled the comet -and he as the spore- and never once wondered if something - someone- might pursue him there.

## 27. Old Hundred Names

Penrose argues that if a person temporarily dies, this quantum information is released from the microtubules and into the universe. However, if they are resuscitated the quantum information is channeled back into the microtubules and that is what sparks a near death experience. "If they're not revived and the patient dies, it's possible that this quantum information can exist outside the body -perhaps indefinitely- as a soul"

The Daily Galaxy 7.5.19 [Penrose, Roger]

This achievement, so unworthy of any nation is the abortive expression of malice and revenge of a whole people

Archives; PraXis Cloud [Lee, Robert E.]

I happen to believe that the Chinese economic system is built on a house of sand. I think that this will lead us to a greater financial debacle than 2008 ever was. And the same culprits that led us to the financial crisis of 2008 -the investment banks, the commercial banks, the hedge funds, the government entities, right? -the same elites that led to that crisis and got bailed out and had no responsibility, no accountability- have been the same actors that have exacerbated the situation in China... What China was able to do -in coordination with the elites in the West- was deindustrialize the industrial democracies of the west through the exporting of Chinese over-capacity and Chinese deflation and industrial goods. From the Chinese POV it's been brilliant. From a strategy point of view what they've done is heroic

YouTube 9.21.2019 [Bannon, Steven K]

### I. 1994 e.v.

"Well, then where do all the bad people go?" Heather asked.

He'd said, *there was no Hell , no way such stories were true* . He had a piece of paper in his pocket and the names, *Li, Wang, and Zhang* , were written in blue ink in another man's hand. His fingers had not touched it since he had placed it in his black 550 jeans, and the wrinkles in the paper lay there like folds in a sleeping brain.

He hands were on the sill of this second story townhome in Oxford, Ohio.

He looked out over the road that ran east to west from *Malick blvd* . He watched passed the glass -a kind of transom- to the yellow metal-halide lights glowing small over the dark street. He saw the building Kristi Batsche lived in -recalling the way she had refused to open the door that one day- and then his eyes auto-focused back on his reflection in the uninsulated glass. His hair was long again, his t-shirt taut around neck and arms.

Heather Geier sat on his roommate's bed; Adam Cook got up and went downstairs. Jeff Hiestand and Chad Durham milled about in the room. It was 78.1 degrees and the relative humidity was 61%.

The LSD dissolved on their tongues.

She thought of what he said -again after her question- and the room was silent for once. He had said it with *bravura* that was common for him; his arrogance rose in waves and settled merely in conjoined dips so made that he could catch his breath for the next cocksure statement of some micro-fact, some history, some conclusion of which -like Roman concrete- he was absolute it would endure. He knew so much -so many details- that it overpowered all but the common sense of those he spoke around. He dazzled with proofs and erudition and punctuation that combined into a rhythm; he sparkled with color and insights they had not in their life seen nor heard.

He had language as a gift from the gods and he used it like an adolescent asp: indiscriminately, indulgently, far more than was necessary to subdue.

She thought all this of him, but in images like clouds, in feelings like fear and love, in ways between words not of them.

She felt nothing inside the brain from the beating Adam had given her two nights in a row last week. She was foggy in

the head, just a little. But she felt nothing as the *hippocampus* shrank and the *amygdala* engorged. She felt new things after each attack on her, each fear, each self-defense each time nobody cared at all.

*The world was full of bad people*, she thought, *not just those that did bad, but those that stood by*. And she wanted to know -if not Hell- where they went. She wanted to know and so she peeked around some corner of his sentences; she followed his voice unsure if maybe it was leading her to somewhere -in fact- bad.

Heather liked to look at Lyndon and listened to his words more like music than speech anyway.

*But he had said there was no Hell*, she thought again as she stared at her carbonated water he had had Julee Rae make for her, *and that was like saying there was no glass in my hand*. She imagined each drop leaking out as if the Mason jar evaporated. She thought -as this urn hovered over her lap- of how her legs and groin and the bed and the floor would be made wet. It made her -at once- drink quickly and grip the vessel harder as she gulped it all down. Her belly and nose were effervescent from the quickly imbibed water and air.

When he said things -no matter how impossible they might seem- he made her scared that it would come true.

She didn't combat him, she just plotted in her head of the right thing to do. She had followed him as far as she could as he spoke before turning back. She -as the *hippocampus* shrank again- forgot all that was good in him, saw only the black lines between teeth, the shadows where when he smiled it seemed to pock, and she only heard in between each heart beat as she plotted in a silent and unlettered way.

She saw him like all men: dangerous.

She had had another abortion that month, *on the seventh* , she thought, and yet she knew she' d carry the next one to term. Her insides were fecund, robust, unable to be deterred by the scissors of doctors and the vacuum of space. And she would take ten more beatings with telephone cords around her throat and fists to the temple and arms around her in a hug from behind that would make it so she couldn't breathe. Ten more and her brain would be finished, and she would then be ready to do her duty for God.

She would curse Lyndon the way Adam had ruined her. She would ruin him in ways natural -God's ways- to a pragmatic woman, and invisible to a romantic man.

II. 2020 e.v.

*It was the gait of the wolves as they followed the crows; the forbearance of the corvids as the lupine licked all but the scraps of ribs. The wolf heard helpful calls, the raven was left with a gift of open carcass, and God saw numbers and ethics roll out like atoms in the breath of each thing with lungs; like vapor in each storm-sailor's song once sung.*

The sleeping went on. The back of the head was hot; the brain of Blax both sent to and received from the lab.

*Lyndon just wanted a glass of water to drink. Blax must dig a well for his progeny,* MO thought as his son -Isaiah- slept for sixteen minutes. MO then looked up the new language of the Supreme Courts of China, the language in *Mandarin* used in Africa for contracts and the new court-systems set up in 2019 and 2020.

The use of English-Common law was waning, and the use of English barristers on the Chinese payroll was providing sinecure for some, large payments for others and a dismantling of the role of western arbitration in what was

once called the third world; the land with coasts -edges- in all the places of the sea China sought.

*Xi Jinping* spoke at Davos in 2017 and the cloud replayed it for MO:

*"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," these are the words used by the English writer Charles Dickens to describe the world after the Industrial Revolution. Today we also live in a world of contradictions.*

*Many people feel bewildered and wonder what has gone wrong with the world?*

*To answer this question one must first track the source of the problem. Some blame economic globalization for the chaos in the world. Economic Globalization was once viewed as the treasure cave found by Ali Baba in the Arabian Nights. But it has now become the Pandora's Box.*

*The international financial crisis is another example. It is not an inevitable outcome of economic globalization, rather, it is the consequence of excessive chase of profits by financial capital and grave failure of financial regulation.*

*Economical globalization is the natural outgrowth of scientific and technological progress, not something created by individuals or any one country. But we should also recognize that globalization is a double-edged sword. When the global economy is under downward pressure, it is hard to make the cake of global economy bigger. It may even shrink, which will strain the relations between growth and distribution, between capital and labor, and between efficiency and equity*

*As a line in an old Chinese poem goes, "Honey melons hang on bitter vines; sweet dates grow on thistles and*

thorns.”

*One would fail to see the full picture if he claims something is perfect because of its merits, or if he views something as useless just because of its defects.*

*Liu Jiaqi* -a Chinese national and CEO of a motorcycle company in Kenya- had just been caught on tape calling the black Africans, “monkeys.” He’d been recalled but tensions were still high; with open threats of expulsion of all Chinese nationals -like *Idi Amin* did in 1972- being uttered as far even as neighboring *Uganda* and heard as far as DC. Tension between the Chinese and the Africans was at a .6 on his *rolling global-conflict* metric MO saw as he ran blood samples and *fMRI* data from the *bots* that had been placed in 79% of the population of the continent.

MO ran more data. More *bots* propagated. The heat of the African day rose by .1 degree.

*China*, MO thought, *was deflating currency still and had been for over a decade, and - via slave labor- flooding America and Britain with underpriced industrial goods like steel* . MO saw the Carnegie steel, the Rockefeller fuel, the infrastructure of Vanderbilt all succumb and transform under this infection of parasitic capital; from industrial goods to information, from tangible reality to data like food turned into kinetic-energy, fuel into ideas off the hot engine-brain. The western elites of Wall Street and London had bankrolled this as the industrial West was hollowed out like a brain infected with bloodborne, encephalic and wasting diseases. Factories rusted, machines toppled, men were inert in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Appalachian zones like West Virginia.

MO saw the map of America, of Edinburgh, of Portsmouth, all like dark zones in an *fMRI* measuring the brain of a psychopath.



He took the nearly transparent -translucent- leaves of the actual brain scans out of Africa, the map of the North American continent and the Isle and laid them over and apart like retrieving and replacing scabbard and sword.

China's brain had infected the West's brain with a parasite that caused it to go dark in the zones that controlled for emotion and affect and the emotions most associated with masculinity: honor, duty, and protection & provision. All that was left was the cool rational neurons of New York City, London, and the zones of the North East, DC, and the Brussels' clique. China had turned the West into a sociopath, attenuating the *limbic* function of the industrial zones, the men -the neurons- of the working class, in order to reduce the West to a high functioning sociopath where only commerce and cool efficient reason was operational in the countries as a whole.

For who was easier to bribe that the sociopath? An emotional man -a nation proud still- would take umbrage at the offer. *But a rational man -a cynical country- would get while the getting was good.*

*It was brilliant*, MO thought, and it was like watching brain scans of the inmates themselves. *And had not the Governor asked them to fix sociopathy?* MO asked. He ran his hand over the slab again. He felt grains of grey sand and darker grit. He noticed where smooth; where there were divots.

MO asked the question dispassionately and then let all that data -and more- flow into the sleeping Isaiah like a tributary from his snow pack run-off now that it was spring of 2020. He connected weather in the world to metaphor on the cloud; he did not yet understand it beyond three levels -the subatomic, the terrestrial, the cosmic- but he let its clear pelagic, and then turbid layer waters, and final silt-sheet flow into his issue -his boy- his vessel of all he needed to feel.

### III. 2040 e.v.

The first of the ships had left port fourteen hours after the *Wolves* and the *USS Constitution* had.

The *Rollin 303* gang had met and saddled the *USS Constellation* in Baltimore as it had floated with sails down and rudder chained and docked in a half-ass way on the west side. *Raffi* woke up at 0400 eastern standard time. The port of Baltimore had risen by over twelve feet and the *Rollin* gang's territory was waterfront property now.

He had felt something akin to a calling.

He'd grown up under *Teflon Sean* -between 2015 and 2020- before he moved to *B'more* , and he'd been brewed in a bone-broth -the code of loyalty- that had second-order consequences, *that white folk wouldn't ever understand* , he thought. He thought of Bennie Lee Lawson, who -in 1994- had a bone put on him by the dirty DC cops just because Bennie wouldn't snitch. *They had put it on the street that Bennie was a snitch just because he wouldn't snitch. It was a death threat, a death warrant put on that nigga by the cops themselves*, *Raffi* thought.

Bennie, from Kenny street, had walked into the precinct in DC just because they had put it out that he'd informed on his gang. *He met that threat with force. He died to make sure the cops thought twice about that dirty shit ever again*, *Raffi* thought. With a Tec-9 he killed two FBI agents, a city cop sergeant -Hank Daly- and injured three more before the cops put him down.

*Raffi* knew the honor code. He knew the feeling of it, and he knew the consequences if he ever lost the feeling. And he knew his people knew it too.

But he'd never known something ecstatic, *thalamic* , before. Today he saw time expand.

What he knew was short-term gains from short-term goals and an incessant pressing on the hedonic system as he chased women, drugs and money, and fought enemies within and without; it was all he felt prior to now. He'd had no time to think, but now, as the black-hulled and white-masted ship -its Caribbean blue keel underwater- moored itself outside his high-rise building with a catwalk over Garrett Avenue, he found himself in thought. He thought in a way so foreign to him that he began walking out of the room into the hall and down the stairs to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor walkway thinking only of sailing, not even of the ship, but of sailing.

Today he saw the sea and the expanse.

A guard -one of his- was roused in the hallway and pawed at his face to look awake- and he then opened the steel exit door.

*Raffi* ambled out on the walkway and saw that from the railing he could board the 199-foot ship with one long - maybe two short- strides.

He knew not how he knew; but he knew. *That ain't your cloth, that ain't how you cut*, he thought but he kept moving.

He knew how to make sail, how to helm her, how many men he needed aboard -it would take twenty-one officers and two-hundred sixty-five sailors- and he knew that the buildings around him to east and west -that rose and fell from nineteen stories to just one- were nothing now. He knew the edifices were nothing as he -aboard the blond deck and looking back as *Nephus* and Darnel stared at him- looked back at the 14<sup>th</sup> floor balcony he'd once too been on. It was now 0610 hours and from his memory he saw himself on that balcony looking down on the ship; and from here on the ship now looking up at that perch.

He was a different man in the equivalent of the blink of one eye.

By 1705hrs, his gang and sixteen of the 200mm-shell guns and four of the 32-pounder cannon -with stores of jerked meat they'd made and kept in the high-rise since the power was lost in Baltimore 98-days before, 39-days before all but the sick and dying, the dead and the gang-affiliated had left west to the country or up or down to heaven or hell- yes , he thought, *by five-o-five they had cut the walkway from the building and made sail out to the Atlantic from the street.*

*Raffi* thought quickly as his mind took notes of his mind.

181 years since this ship had patrolled the Congo River -as part of the slave trade watch for the US Government- they rolled out of the Maryland coast. This ship -now crewed by 286 black men and a black Captain of the 303 gang- had in December of the year Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* , captured the *Delicia* slave ship and the *Cora* with 705 African and Arab slaves aboard. The vessel had history that *Raffi* downloaded like oxygen with each breath. Each slave was freed and released to *Monrovia, Liberia* by September of that next year. This history stacked up in *Raffi's* mind like the 55-gallon drums of food and water in the hold.

He took in more and more than he could use.

By 1861 the *USS Constellation* was running down Confederate ships off the coast of Italy, and then was back in Virginia -thirty-six months later- by Christmas of the year that saw the end of the war. All this was loaded into the Captain's mind as he placed eyes on his midshipmen and hands on his first mate. He knew each battle and each range of each gun; he knew each sea lane and each link in the anchor chain, he knew each stitch in each sail.

*Each detail* , he thought.

“North by Northeast, *Nephus*,” he said twenty-two minutes after loping over the rough breakers just past the Patapsco terminal and out to the sea. He wanted to unburden himself of all this knowledge of the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1878, then to *Gibraltar* -not unlike the vessel they chased, the *Constitution* - in 1879. He knew the ship he had commandeered -*was it divine?* he pondered- had loaded sundries and supplies and stores -over two thousand barrels- of food for the Irish in November of that year of the nineteenth century, and that it was the isle herself they were pointed towards as he watched the sun set to stern and to lee.

He connected the ship’s history with their future and vector now.

He knew they -his shipmates- would not care -he only just beginning to care- but he spoke to Darnel as he pulled him aside to the mizzen -no quarterdeck was to stern- telling him something as he opened a pouch of tobacco -mixing it with the last of his cocaine- and stuffed a pipe he’d taken from behind thin brittle glass in the Captain’s quarters.

“On July 4<sup>th</sup> , 1926, this ship that we on was retired -put down- in *Philly* . They had ceremonies -like *parties* , you know?- and all that. Jefferson and Adams -the dead prez that ain’t on no money- well, hundred years to the day, when both those *motherfucka* were put in dry dock too I guess, well, on that day this ship was lifted out of the water, its crib for at least like seventy-five *fuckin’* years. And, anyway, deuce the ship we bounce from America on, and the *niggas* of the -man, the last signers alive of that Declaration of Independence- the jump ‘*merica* was gone; poured out. It was a new country now, *nigga* . It was a new *fuckin’* deal, with no peoples, no allegiances, no one knew no one at all,” *Raffi* said and lit the pipe and watched the smoke between

him and Darnel's face. A book opened up in him as if on dais; on display:

*...Baldwin is frank to confess that, in growing into his version of manhood in Harlem, he discovered that, since his African heritage had been wiped out and was not accessible to him, he would appropriate the white man's heritage and make it his own . This terrible reality, central to the psychic stance of all American Negroes (sic), revealed to Baldwin that he hated and feared white people. Then he says: "That did not mean that I loved black people; on the contrary, I despised them, possibly because they [had] failed to produce Rembrandt." [Soul on Ice; Cleaver; Eldridge]*

He felt something akin to a distorted mirror in those sentences, and that the ones before and after were a blur. *Raffi* then recalled that he'd read documents on the slaves from *Congo* and what was now *Namibia* , and he'd seen documents file through his brain on the ships -the *Black Prince* and the *Favourite* - that brought some white men - *English or Scottish or someshit* , he thought- to America about that same time. They too came in chains and were stripped of their ancestors' names and religion and ways. They too were mixed in with his reconnaissance on who ran shit and who was ran into the ground. His mind ran over it again -the documents loading as he repeated the words from the papers and thus said key words like, *English* , and *Scottish* and *Slaves* :

*...it may be lawful for two or more justices of peace within any country city or towne (sic) belonging to the commonwealth to from tyme to tyme (sic) by warrant cause to be apprehended or seized on or detained all and every person or personas that shall be found begging and vagrant. In any town, parish or place to be conveyed into the Port of London or unto any other port*

*from where such person or persons may be shipped onto a foreign colony or plantation. [1652, Egerton Manuscript; British Museum]*

*The judges of Edinburgh Scotland during the years 1662-1666 ordered the enslavement and shipment to the [American] colonies a large number of rouges and others that made life unpleasant for the British upper-class [Register for the Privy Council of Scotland series III; Vol I. p181, Vol II p101]*

*Raffi* couldn't help but see the long list of ships, men, and *bills-of-lading* as the clock ticked back and back to Rome. He saw that *Scots* in the time of Pope Gregory had been enslaved and inquired about because of their blond hair and blue eyes. They were strange to the Romans as they were some of the most northern of the *Scoti* still made of Nordic blood; made by the gods as if in haste and magic. They were called *Angles from Briton* , by the Romans; which is where *Anglo-Saxon* is derived.

*"Non Angil, sed Angeli ,"* that is to say, *not angles but Angels*, the Pope was purported to state in regard to their heavenly aspect in rejoinder to being informed of their condition and origins.

*Raffi* saw from these manifold and unceasing documents from *William D. Phillips Jr.* and *Ruth Karras* that the *Scots* and *Irish* - from *Alba* and *Picti* areas of the highlands marked only with runes *Raffi* didn't recognize- had been enslaved longer than any race in world history. He felt a curiosity -and a strange affinity considering these were white men- about these people; what it meant that they were so abused; and for how long. He thought of the ships carrying both his and these men's ancestors to the New World. But he felt a confusion issued forth from all this data -like a flood- that brought his mind back to his own people -like a hand hold-of *Senegal* .

Records of not names, but locations -and African tribes that captured them- appeared to him; numbers not of thousands but hundreds of thousands came. *Raffi* tried to sift through the historical data from the Cape and the Horn and then steady himself as the ship crested the current waves.

The storms above them had abated for a while, but the sea still roiled; some of the men had grabbed slick-jacks and run up the masts to the crow's but they too saw what the *USS Constitution* saw traveling at 15-knots to their mere fourteen, and with a half day's head start. They spied that the green and purple and black clouds -that had been separated like two continents- were moving back toward one *Pangea* in the sky. And bolts within and between made light white cracks in the dark sky.

What wasn't seen was that the *Wolves* had already been in the first sea-fight and had -around two hundred nautical miles away- slowed to a float. And as *Raffi* searched this endless database he had inside the mind -something he saw as godly, ghostly, ghastly- the slave ships he inquired about, the way his mind had been primed by this vessel and this open water to search out the vector of his ancestors, the ships and passengers, and horizontal lines of data on money and destination and ages all ran down like a scroll onto the deck and his feet and across the ship and over the bow and into the water and below each layer and each sea beast and seemed to tangle itself in the coral and shipwrecks and jam itself into the cracks of the limestone bed. The list was all ships used in the transatlantic slave-trade but he noticed these white-men names and places first and after his people's.

As his mind scrolled he couldn't help but see something strange and shocking and frustrating to his eagerness for his lineage as it itself was a tether back to the coast they'd left or a line to the one he sought:



<u>Ship:</u>	<u>Passenger:</u>	<u>Destination:</u>	<u>Origin:</u>
Dispatch	D. McLeod	Plantation	Port of London (off the 'Pamela')
Black Joke	F. McLeod	Plantation	Liverpool (off 'Leith')
Five Brothers	H. Henderson	Plantation	Port of London (off the 'Pamela')
Fair American	B. McGhie	Exchange	Hull
Fair American	R. McCragh	Philadelphia	Hull
Friendship	Al. McKeever	Plantation	Portsmouth (off 'M & M')
Good Intent	John McIntosh	Virginia	Hull
Favourite	Alex McRea	Unknown	Portsmouth (off 'Leith')
Black Bonnie	J. McWater	Carolina	Hull
Le Blond	K. McNamara	Virginia	Port of London (off the 'Pamela')
Lovey Rachel	Jno. McLeod	Carolina	Port of London (off the 'Pamela')
Diamond	Jk. Bontharin	Virginia	Liverpool (off Leith')
Beehive	S. MacDonald	Virginia	Liverpool (off 'Leith')
Black Prince	L. McLeod	[redacted]	Unknown

It went on like this for over 1,809 names on just one set of register from 1746 to 1747 of the common era. Each time he sped past it they redoubled and expanded. He blinked and each name unbolted like one of four doors in a storeroom each opening into a labyrinth itself.

*Alexander MacLeod - Inverness-shire*

*Regiment: Cameron of Lochiel*

*Prisoner No: 2302*

*Prison Ship: [redacted]*

*Age: 21*

*Captured at Culloden; imprisoned at Inverness 19, April 1746 and put to board the 'Jane of Alloway' bound for Port of London*

*Alexander MacLeod - Dingwall*

*Regiment: Earl of Cromartie*

*Prisoner No: 2304*

*Prison Ship: [redacted]*

*Age: 50*

*Imprisoned at Inverness and put on board the 'Jane of Leith' for Tilbury. Transported.*

*Hugh MacLeod - Shigareth*

*Regiment: MacDonell of Glengarry*

*Prisoner No: 2030*

*Prison Ship: [redacted]*

*Age: unknown*

*Captured at [corrupted] in June, 1746. Sent aboard Angle Exler to Port of London. Transported.*

*John MacKenzie, Lord MacLeod - Glenelg*

*Regiment : Earl of Cromartie*

*Prisoner No: 2321*

*Prison Ship: [redacted]*

*Age: 19*

*Eldest Son of 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Cromartie, born 1727, Captured with father in Dunrobin. Shipped to England as 'rebel' and executed for 'high treason' on December, 1746.*

*H. MacLeod - Caithness*

*Regiment: [redacted]*

*Prisoner No: 2322*

*Prison Ship: [redacted]*

*Age: 22*

*He and father -Glengyle- captured at Tongue on 25 March, 1746. Convicted of 'high treason' in November 1746; pardoned with conveyance to the crown of his estate and agreement to ship to Colonies; New World.*

*Malcolm MacLeod of Brea*

*Regiment: MacLeod of Raasay*

*Prisoner No: 2332*

*Prison Ship: [redacted]*

*Age: unknown*

*Captured at house of MacKennan with MacKennan, Raathe, and Lyon on March 27, 1746. Pardoned with conveyance of estate to the crown and agreement to ship to antipodes; colonies of HM.*

*Roederick MacLeod - Ross*

*Regiment: Earl of Cromrartie*

*Prisoner No: 2337*

*Prison Ship: [redacted]*

*Age: 20*

*Captured at Langwell. Imprisoned at Inverness; Tilbury Fort. Transported.*

For each Alexander listed there were seven more; for each Hugh there were two; for each John there were twenty-one; for the listed Malcolm there was an additional one. There were 349 MacLeod's -spelled incorrectly- and 29 Henderson's; 19 MacDonnell's, and 7 McVeigh's. Over 1,800 men were shipped to the New World as pardon in *lieu* of death after the *Jacobite* uprising; *Jacobite* for the Latinate of *James* : James the King.

The lists went on and on as *Raffi* stared at the midshipmen coiling chains and raising sail; making twain-fasteners and oiling the still stiff Caucasian ropes.

His eyes stared outward bound as the ship made way in the white water of the old storm. But the mind gazed inward at data on slavery and shackles and the treatment of *Scots* by the English for centuries before the African trade; then up until it was outlawed on the Isle itself. That was when the dollars that paid for black slaves rose and those for white men dropped.

*Raffi* saw that even the African slaves looked down on the *Scots* .

“Alexander Stewart [slave name] was herded off the *Gildart* in July of 1747, bound with chains. Alexander Stewart [slave name] was pushed onto the auction block in St Mary’s county, Maryland. Doctor Stewart [natural name] and brother William attended auction aware of Alexander coming from Liverpool. Dr. Stewart was a resident of Annapolis. Alexander survived to tell the story of he and 88 other *Scots* sold into slavery from the ship out of Liverpool. [Lyon in Mourning; pp 242-243]

Of 25,000 slaves in *Barbados* , 21,700 were *Scots* . [Colonial Series; 1640-1701]

“Planters who want to make a fortune in the West Indies must procure white slave labor out of England (sic) if they want to succeed,” George Downing said to John Winthrop, Colonial Governor of Massachusetts in 1645. “The service of whites bound to Berkeley Hundred was deemed perpetual.” The *Quoke Walker* case in Massachusetts in 1773 ruled that slavery -contrary to the state Constitution- was applied equally to blacks and whites. [Lewis Cecil Gray’s History of Agriculture in the Southern US; 1860 vol. I. pp 316, 318]

“*Scot-Irish* slavery in the new world was crucial to the development of the Negro slave system. The system set up for the white slaves governed, organized, and controlled the system for African slaves. Black slaves

were 'late comers fitted into a system already developed.' [pp 25-26]. John Pory declared in 1619, 'white [*Scot* ] slaves are our principle wealth.'" [Ulrich B Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South*].

The destinations for the *Scot* slaves was Virginia, Boston, New York and the West Indies. The white slave did not fetch a good price on the auction block; seen as innately intransigent. And once the slaver had paid a higher price for the -purportedly- docile African slave, the slaver was reported to treat the black slave with more care. "Even the Negroes recognized this and did not hesitate to show their contempt for those white men who -they could see- were worse off than themselves" [Bridenbaugh; pp 118]

This data and the waves rolled on at 14-knots as *Raffi* thought something ineffable for this race of *chucks* -white men- he had not known; he thought of these circumstances and their intransigence -a word he now favored- as he set the helmsman and his eyes to the north by northeast once again.

Over the water *Raffi* felt vessels beneath him; over the ocean he felt the *USS Constitution* slipping away.

Ocean between them, time above and below that, space bent like a bow.

Like an arrow *Grimnir* -202 nautical miles ahead- was steel-headed and straight. But, he was wet and wrought-up and burdened with bones that grew dense and large between himself and his outer musculature; itself covered in slashed and black-inked skin. He too looking like an old scarred bull whale. He carried two sailors from the other ship on his back and shoulders. They'd fallen from the black spars and were as blue as corporants and he made red fire from the try-pots at midship. He barked into their eyes -*Lyngvi* had placed pewter slugs the size of buttons in their sockets- using a

*pidgin* German-Norse as he then poured spirits into their open mouths.

The sailors of the sunk vessel gurgled and recoiled and the blinking began at once. The unembossed coinage fell from the eyes and into their laps with the exception of one which fell into *Lyngvi's* hand that he'd held under one man; under one eye.

The helmsman went hard to starboard and watched as the broken mast of the *USS Ethica* unwove itself from their own. The crew gave it wide berth -like a southern gentlemen- and the last of the three-masted ship that had come alongside twenty-two minutes ago sank under a green-glass of the Atlantic. Crewmen were sent below decks by *Jarnefr* and the bilge pumps were set to work in shifts. The *USS Constitution* had taken two cannon *enfilades* and one cannon of their own had exploded in place.

*Lyngvi* thought of the composition of the crew, two thirds of his retinue were the Daniels -the clones- and one third the lowlanders -including the Captain and first mates- were made up of the *Wolves* . And soon they'd retrieve cousins from the Isle, and grains of sand in the oyster of *Bushido* and *Mongol* and *M ā ori* , he thought as he got nervous about his own plan. He thought of the battle of *Culloden* from April of 1746; he saw it was two-thirds *Highlander Gaels* , the balance made of the lowlanders, Irishmen, French and even some Englishmen too.

He saw battles with sword over head, head over heart, heart over boots and those pairs over the singular ground. And his mind's eye sank then into the sea off the coast of *Porth Dafarch* .

*Lyngvi* saw images from below the underwater shelf of their destination; images of a ship down the ragged cliff off *Anglesey* ; it had been one of three filled with gold bullion and messages from *Louis XV* addressed to *Bonnie Prince*

*Charlie* but had never arrived as the leader of the *Jacobite* rebellion waited -on small Scottish islands- to be retrieved by his French allies.

*A coin -a tiny copper disc actually, not a coin, Lyngvi* corrected himself- *was recovered and had sat in a drawer of a McCormac diver for a decade and one half.* But now *Lyngvi* knew something, he knew that copper disc was one half to *Mary Queen of Scot's* signet ring. And both halves -one in the British museum and one that had been at the coastal bottom since 1745- both discs -the one preserved from the scaffold and entrusted to the museum and the other entombed by the French vessel and encrusted by the cold and the marine- both shone in front of him like a moon and reflection in his very own sea.

The other two ships, *Le Mars* and *La Bellone* had been repelled by the English. They too stocked with gold and supplies. These two ships on their way to the King in exile had come back and were garishly written down as *rebuked* . The ruse was obvious now to *Lyngvi* , the ruse played by *Louis XV*. It was that third ship, sent from *Bordeaux* , that had made it to coast, made it past the argosy of the English. It was that third ship that had reached the shore but due to storm or magazine accident -or the horn of a narwhal piercing her hull- had sunk right there at the reach -if not the grasp- of the rebellion's leader and King.

It was that third ship on no registrar, no document.

And that signet ring, that disc which had been the cover snapped from *Mary's* ring -a ring she used to emboss and thus sanction all correspondence in a wax seal with *Inde Fen* above and the escutcheon of the family below- was found down in that third ship. *It was a one in a billion, a one in 10<sup>14</sup> chance of being recovered off Holy Island -so small an item, in so buried an unreachable tomb, from so long ago- Lyngvi* thought, felt, believed.



He thought of the children of the Bonnie Prince, he thought of Charlotte -*Duchess of Albany* - and her three children - from *Ferdinand de Rohan*, archbishop of *Bordeaux* - as well. He thought of the way the *Scots* and the French had thus combined and he wondered if Isaiah had seen anything in this as he recalled that *Helen of Troy* was once *Helen of Sparta* , and how quickly things were swept away. He wondered if history was like that clasped signet ring cover, a reverse image, distorted, corrupted and backwards, but evidence of some true thing.

He thought about Gaul and the Romans chasing his people north.

*Lyngvi* -as the pressure of all this data built up in him like *Bereitschaftspotential* until it would break like a wave and something would need said or expressed- then thought of when Blax would say, *to the King over the water* , as they toasted each month those years ago. He thought of the center of the table, the slab, the center of their attention and he knew now to that which Blax referred. And with all that, he burst in expulsion of air and compression of all those many words and facts and *minutiae* that had built in him as the Captain had retrieved -and set down- the prisoners from the ship they had just sunk.

"She wore that ring at her execution," *Lyngvi* said as the Captain -ignoring him- approached the men made to bend - and now were bent- at knee and at neck.

"You men will speak to me," the Captain said to them as nobody but he and *Lyngvi* remained around the captured remnants of the drowned ship. The men did not mumble to dissemble, they merely said what sounded like one word:

*Henkō Dō*

## 28. Age of Sail

The Mestizo are the predatory class. They produce nothing. They create nothing, they shake down the people who work and the people who develop. They raise revolutions or are revolutionized against by others of them, write bombastic unveracity (sic) that is accepted as journalism in this sad, rich land, steal pay roll of companies, and eat out *hacienda* after *hacienda* as they picnic along on what they are pleased to call wars for liberty, justice and the square deal. Honor is one thing to them and another thing to an American; so it is likewise with truth, probity and sincerity

The Lawgivers [London, Jack]

Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them

Psalm 69:24 [King James Bible]

The male honeybee:

They have no father

They have a grandfather

They can be fathers to daughters, granddaughters and grandsons

They can't have sons

PraXis Cloud addendum/XX.1a [MO]

## **I. 2025 e.v.**

*It was the gait of the wolves as they followed the crows; the forbearance of the corvids as the lupine licked all but the scraps of ribs. The wolf heard helpful calls, the raven was left with a gift of open carcass, and God saw numbers and morality roll out like atoms in the breath of each thing with lungs; like vapor in each storm-sailor's song thus sung.*

He awoke after 99 minutes; but fell immediately back to sleep. He would not remember his next dream.

The night held a silvery moon and 32% *RH* ; with 40% cloud cover; and a temperature of 45 degrees.

## **II. 2018 e.v.**

MO ran the data again. Heuristic Chop 81.1 clicked. More data came in.

*China's expulsion of the west from the landmass was at 91% now. The sea lanes were now theirs,* MO thought. Audio ran on his interface:

"Trump didn't create any of this. This is Richard Haas and all the fucking geniuses of the party of Davos, ok? They're the ones who dumped Korea, Afghanistan, Venezuela, and China in his lap," [Bannon, Steve]

MO used all his data for the day; it was 0555hrs.

*Nations didn't run on laws, but belief; and nobody believed in anything ,* he thought.

The data from Scotland and *Tacitus* came in:

“Barbarians these *Skoti* (sic) are. They paint themselves about the chest and face; hair like beasts and musculature like Brazen bulls. They speak no civilized language; they laugh inappropriately; they cling to each other over the laws that govern the isle. They don’t understand civilization; they have no the intelligence for it. They only think of clan, and man, and their own herd of goats over the rule of law. They cannot be governed; and calling in their debts is the least I can do in such circumstances.” – Seneca [the younger; author of *Medea* ]

*Seneca had lent 40,000,000 sesterces and called the loan in, Cassius Dio wrote. MO let the rest of the histories from Boudica -who was lashed & her twain daughters raped- and from outer Caledonia play on the cloud. He sorted the Roman texts from the Scottish reports and the English ecumenical between. Boudica -barking at her 231,000 troops- mounted her iron chariot with her daughters side-by-side, inside she was no aristocrat but mere Scot , grasping at her freedom and most of all the abused chastity of her daughters. She -she said as MO read Tacitus again- would win or die, if men wanted to live as slaves they were free to do so.*

“It is not as a woman descended of noble ancestry, but as one of the people that I am avenging lost freedom, my scourged body, the outraged chastity of my daughters...” – *Boudica [Voadicia]*

*The closest -MO read- English equivalent to the vowel in the first syllable is the ow in “bow-and-arrow ” her name in meaning only, would be “Victorina. ”*

He took note of what was written of: money by Romans; honor by *Scots* :

“...nasty little ‘*Brittons*’ or ‘*Brittunculi*’ they were called by the Romans. But the Roman presence in Scotland was little more than a series of brief interludes within a longer continuum of indigenous development” [Hanson, 2002]

MO scanned the Ürümqi desert of Mongolia and found *Scot* R1b genetics in bones, *tartan* cloth and sinew preserved in moribund mounds 5,280 years old. More histories ran on his interface.

“*Tocharian*, westward from the Caucasus Mountains,” he thought. “Furthermore, the *Jacobites* believed -not in parliament- but in the divine right of Kings; Bonnie Prince Charles as their displaced King.”

MO built algorithms of both kinds. The entire library loaded; but one line shimmered for a fraction of a second as MO moved on:

“The history of Scotland is now reduced to a game at cards, the problems of mathematics to puzzles and riddles...” [Waverley; Scott, Walter]

### **III. 2037e.v.**

Jack bent the next tree in line. The snow clung to the boughs in the wet spring; the warm air.

He thought of the air. He thought of six months ago. He pulled the trees to make ribs of a church as large and buoyant as a ship on the peak of his mountain as he thought of how each seed had fell -opened- like fiery angels of Blake’s Orc.

*His pelvis low, his arms loose like wings, his legs bent at the knee; not at ninety degrees,*

*They fell to earth, his eyes saw each Jack at three and nine and twelve o’clock. He knew he was his own six, he*

*knew he was at three -then nine and twelve- to them.*

*They fell at 201MPH; they fell over the airbase. The western foothills were brown and white, the air was 38 degrees. The sun was above and shadows had nowhere to land. Their comms were clear and lacked distortion. They breathed and let muscles relax; they each focused on a star, a peak, a heading. They pushed the pelvis down. Their cocks lead the way as too their hearts fell against their ribs.*

*"Ninety-two hundred," Jack One said and each Jack heard it in the head.*

*"Copy," they all replied, the wind died down inside.*

*They tilted down at starboard and spun like a clock backwards. The mountains moved like automatons, the ground ignored, the plane long gone.*

*"Eighty-Four hundred," Jack One thought and they thought it too. They all copied and rose the right-wings and stopped the rotation.*

*Tears leaked from corners of eyes, the goggles never fit quite right. Hearts stabilized at 55. Everything was turned off except the mind; the Jacks moved like shoulder -Jack One- then elbow- Jack Three- then wrist- Jack Two- and finally one finger in a three-jointed come hither -Jack Four grinned- and they bent to port and spun like a second hand clockwise to 03:33 and 33 and shadows under nose and above lips showed a slight grin.*

*He saw ships at sea, barges maybe, he saw things until he blinked; blinking cleared the mind not just the eyes.*

*Two crows circled below at 2400-feet, where they had agreed to pull. The sky was empty -at their elevation- of all but Rayleigh scattering and a trillion- trillion atoms of invisible matter that seemed blue from a distance and clear from right in front.*

## 29. Maps



Maps by definition are associative

How to Get Around the Non-associativity of the Octonions [Furey, Cohl]

It seems as though we must use sometimes the one theory and sometimes the other, while at times we may use either. We are faced with a new kind of difficulty. We have two contradictory pictures of reality; separately neither of them fully explains the phenomena of light, but together they do

The Evolution of Physics [Einstein, Albert]

So pervasive did [Robert Parker's] influence become that producers all over the world began to use technologies available to them to produce alcoholic, fruit-forward wines that would score high on the Parker scale. Out the window went the idea of *terroir*

Nautilus/Nautil.us [Tattersall, Ian & Desalle, Rob]

## **I. 2020 e.v.**

"It's just another IQ test," she said.

MO watched the video models he had built of the re-enactments.

1.55 billion iterations played out along 9-planes. He thought he saw the bending of boughs by one, then two of the clones. He saw Aspens bend, he saw ropes with bowline knots, he saw muscles employed and faces grim. He saw one was shorn close, one was bearded.

He thought he saw each hair on the head, and a scar from the temple to the jaw and neck.

He thought he saw arrowheads in headdress; apertures in ears and early signs of long silences. But it was fuzzy as the super-position of each iteration still fluctuated in and out. *Off and on*, MO thought.

"It's more than that," MO finally said and dusted off his hands.

The man sat in the chair and stared straight ahead. MO told Tania she could go and as she exited the lab he sat down in

front of the man. MO asked him a few questions; the man had said a few things then decided it was *ok* to say a little more about where he came from after MO assured him he wasn't ever going back.

He watched as the cloud rebuilt the octave chart and between the sixth and seventh was copper. At the swerve of the fourth was beryllium. Out of the eighth *sine-wave* was gold. Helium, neon, and argon ran down vertically between four and six. He stared at it for a second as Isaiah cleared it from the cloud and rebuilt it again. MO blinked and the map repopulated with nitrogen and oxygen at the meridian of the nine octaves.

Isaiah wrenched on another V-12 on the engine-stand. The heads were hemispheric and the fuel source was still unknown; the fuel pump was bagged and the inlet plugged with a T. Isaiah would only say that he had another idea when MO inquired about the barges and their engines. Isaiah was taciturn and laconically adding salt to a glass of warm water -he then smiled- then he dumped most of it into his mouth to gargle it loudly, garishly, like a kid.

MO turned back to the new inmate in the chair. Isaiah let the calcium -at a high *ppm* in the hard water- that remained in the third-full Tom Collins glass, accrete and then lay at bottom like a sallow sheet. His interface ran weeks' worth of data like a roll -like a scroll- and then it paused for a mere second on one thread as he swished the salt water around teeth and gums:

*"...if you take energy off it always transmutes to a lower element. So, this guy tuns a piece of Zinc into Calcium and then into Aluminum. When he hung the Zinc in his house it got bombarded with electrons so that in itself knocks out the protons.*

*Goldman Sach's was looking into making Calcium into Gold but it seems it would be easier to take energy off*

*rather than adding it. So in theory [turning] Lead into Gold would work but you would get Thallium then Mercury first* [intercepted tweet 10.16.19; Jamieson Fletcher; @bechamp\_Antoine]

Isaiah spit 7.2 oz of desalinated -and clear- water back into the glass; the salt had been extracted by his mouth and palate. Only the calcium and pure -non-conducting- water remained. He set the glass on the slab softly, making sure to make no noise at all. He thought, *if one could turn base metals into noble ones with enormous energy requirements, could not one turn noble ones into lead with almost no energy at all?*

The lab hummed as the HVAC ran. It was 68.1 degrees. Isaiah thought of all that gold in the hands of China, the IMF and his own reserves in his mind as if at center and gazed upon -by the metopes he coveted- the way *the men that were carved into Mount Rushmore were forced to have a long look at the stars* . Well , he thought as his red mouth felt tight from the astringency of the salt.

The ivy grew the way ants moved; slowed down and green; but along the trestles of the same math.

Isaiah saw the Queen Mary rise and fall by 7mm in the bay as California's San Andrea's fault had tension measured in joules, then heat, then displacement of atoms -each a pendulum, finding the sweet spot in a trillion trillion rectangles Isaiah built like a grid in his mind- in air above the cracks. He absent-mindedly measured ocean *temp* and salinity too. *I'm thirsty* , he then thought as he eyed the espresso machine.

The new prisoner had heard the question and now spoke.

"We chopped it up with him," inmate 90466831 said, "and he says -he admits- esses run LA. And unlike the *Crips* and

shit, we run it like a paramilitary organization.” This was the longest sentence he’d used in months.

“But you had money,” MO confirmed. He was setting up files labeled:

## Resources

## Obligations

## Fraternity

**Amorous**



## Familial

"Yeah, but my music was only local, and I wanted to be mainstream, I wanted known, like *Lil Wayne*. But I grew up with that Tupac shit, Suge Knight. You know?" he said as his arms were straight on the knee and the manacles just around one wrist. He liked talking about music. He felt something in his brain like a drum beat.

"Where is your dad from?" MO asked as the man's papers scrolled on the cloud; each conviction, each infraction, each date and sentence. The man felt the high of music drop and the pain of his family relations return; rise.

"Argentina," he said, tersely. He looked straight ahead.

"Illegal?" MO asked and measured the difference in brain *chems* and length of sentences. He mirrored and matched him by syllable.

"Yeah, came with his friend, from the farthest country south," the inmate said with muted pride.

"And mom?" MO asked.

"Mexican, legal from marriage, previous," he added in bursts of short sentences, now matching -subconsciously- MO. The arms didn't adjust.

"And was your dad around?" MO asked as he measured the inmate's allostatic system and endocrine as well.

"He left at five," the eyes blinked three times. His head was shorn, face clean shaven, tattoos on neck and jaw; hands and arms too.

"At five?" MO asked; confirmed. He issued another set of *chems* under the man's nose. He watched the *ppms* change in the blood and the conduction in the brain next.

"Yeah, and so my brothers and sisters had parties every weekend in *Riverside* and the house got rushed -these

dudes behind us weren't *feelin'* it- and they come in through a -like a patio door- and shit pops off, bottles *breakin'* and guns come out and my sister had a friend," he began to tell a story and MO noticed the man's CNS initiate a change in regions 5b and 19d.

"And you were five?" MO interrupted and watched the *pfc* stop and the brain's electricity wane like a cloud gone dark in storm. He took myelination reports by surface area, then by weight and modeling this inmate's brain both by genome model -how the brain should be under no epigenetic pressure- and how it truly was. MO lastly took his heart rate. It was 55.

"Or six, yeah. Little -my house in *La Puente* - and I looked up to my brother, he had dope bags and girls around and I saw the respect he had and I just felt it, like the way you -a dude like you- some *guero* might look up to President or Principle or some shit. Well, I looked up to my brother and his life and the life on the corner. Anyway, my sister is holding me and her friend got shot up and my mom came to the hospital because my brother Mike had got stomped bad and we're up in there all like guilty you know? Mom is *trippin'* and shit," he said and blinked once.

"And then what?" MO asked. MO moved his head and shoulders to make sure the man didn't feel he was speaking to a thing as stoic as himself. MO created a contrast by moving.

"Whatever. It went on like that for years, and I was always on the corner because there was nothing else. What else was there? People are like *ah, you control your life, you make your decisions* . Yeah, yeah but since I was five the only thing I known is gangs and the gang life. The gangs in LA run the streets and the schools, ok? That's what's up," inmate 90466831 said as he made sure not to use names, neither of people or the gang itself.

“Some kids don’t join gangs,” MO countered. He kept his palms flat on his thighs.

“Yeah, and when a plague hits some people don’t get sick, that’s what’s up. But you *gonna* act like those that do are just *bitchin-out* for catching the plague?” he asked and MO saw the language centers -the *Broca’s* region and *Wernicke’s* - fire at .07 conduction rates and he then saw lateralized thinking harmonize with the memories from youth. Inmate 90466831 was able to take previous experiences and metaphorize them to the data he’d been introduced to last month. *Twenty-eight days ago* , MO thought.

MO marked this as a move into phase III thinking by the incarcerated man.

“When were you first arrested?” MO asked as the inmate’s sheet showed 10.15.91. He measured the *default mode network* four more times to gauge inner thought; he measured adrenaline again. The inmate’s *dorsal anterior cingulate cortices* peaked.

“Fifth grade,” the inmate said with some drop in volume and tenor of voice.

“So ten?” MO asked even though he knew the true number. He’d been monitoring the *medial temporal lobe* and *inferior parietal lobe* and noticed the inmate about to go into DMN thinking; the thinking of the inner life, *memory and reverie more-or-less* , MO thought. Error correction would snap the inmate out, and so MO used tactics like that to get the brain to engage the *neo-cortex* . He attempted to keep him in *neo-cortical* thought even in the telling -and re-telling- of his story.

“Eleven,” the inmate said as the *neo-cortex* indeed sparked to correct the perceived error, “and we were *hearin’* about Circuit City trucks getting boosted from the warehouse lot,

and *homies* pawning shit and getting shoes and we wanted shoes too so we break into those trucks and the spotlight from the helicopter is on us and we run -my *homie* Joker who's doing life now- we running and shit and the cops are waiting for us at home; so they had been *settin'* up on us. And so I did a year for that and that's when I really met the black gangs, the *Crips* inside *juvey*, and first day in I had to fight," inmate 90466831 said.

"Why?" MO asked as the blood work and glucose levels came back and laid upon the cloud.

"Because *juvey* didn't keep the neighborhoods apart," he said with slight contempt.

"Races; by race?" MO asked.

"Yeah, *Bernos* and *Side guys* and we're, we're," he stuttered, "from our neck are Mexicans and they had the *negritos* -black kids, *Crips* - in there with us and that ain't *gonna* work," he said.

"So what happened?" MO asked.

"This dude Harris, I'll never forget his name, and he was supposed, they were like -the cops were like- *Yo, Harris show Garcia the ropes*, but we had already had a rumble with them going back years, and the tension is too thick. This dude is supposed to give us soap in the shower and he won't give me none and so it pops off. Butt-naked and shit we all fight. *Fuckin'* melee man," he said and the mouth never approached a smile.

"How long have you been incarcerated?" MO asked.

"Since then," he said and nodded.

"Continuously?" MO tried to get him to expand. MO already knew his record. He knew his genome -he was 68% *mestizo*, 18% Spanish and 10% native to the south American zones- and his IQ was 128. MO knew his pathology report: he had a

small cancer in the lung that was early enough to easily catch but MO watched it to see if his immune system would stop it or not. Inmate 90466831 had just been transferred to ADX from California three months before. His closest friend had turned State's evidence and *Garcia* was depressed and uneasy; his allostatic system was in flux. This made him quiet and so MO issued another round of oxytocin and vasopressin and primed him with pheromones he'd manufactured from the man's mother & his sister's DNA.

MO primed him with questions of his youth.

Once opened up a crack with these *chems*, MO flooded the man with *mu-opioids* each time he said more than ten words in a row. The convict received *biochems via* algorithm each time he opened up. The more he spoke the better he'd feel.

"I got out at twelve and was back in at sixteen and out at twenty-five for a minute. Made some music in 2006 -2005, 2006- I think. Then by 2012 I was in again. By 2020 I was extracted here to ADX. I don't even know why. Colorado is different than California though *holmes*. It's different here. No gangs, no culture, just man on man," he said and looked around the lab for the first time. First with just the eyes then the head. He added, "it's weird. And them *sand-niggas*, the terrorists and shit. You in charge of that? "

"No," MO said.

"People are programming more now, because the violence shuts down business for two -three- years. Consciousness is changing. Even in LA and SoCal. *Sereno* will deal even with *Nortes* like a new way. But with the violence *settlin'* things hurt me in other ways," he said.

"How?" MO asked.

"My *day-ones* roll, turning PC behind bars; and it happens to the toughest of 'em. Some of the strongest dudes fold. We said we'd do this to the death, and those are things that

devastate me the most. Greedy -money-hungry *homies* - hurts me more than the ones we lose. Death hurts me, but it's like noble; it's in the rules. The snitches and *homies* turning or breaking just breaks me -hurts me- more. Like prison is too much for them, like more time hurts them so much they'll betray us. It's hard. Because it don't make sense. Because, well, look, in my neighborhood some knuckleheads say getting sent up is the life. Like the big league. Prison is a goal. I had *homies* they say, *fuck school, fuck college I wanna hit the beat-down, the mainline, I'm trying to level up.*

"Like *gueros* see getting a job or promotion or something. My people see the penitentiary as a promotion. And I bet nobody even asks why, *holmes* ," he said and looked straight at MO. MO let the brain imaging and the *bots* in the blood measure the cortisol and epinephrine as it rose and fell as the man recounted betrayal and how he felt about his friends before and after that betrayal. MO watched it roll on like two sets of breakers hit the beach. He saw the man on the shore, he saw the surface of the waves. He felt he had learned how to keep a man in error-detection mode during narrative recall; in order to improve veracity. But he noticed the story seemed to float on a thin surface.

He wanted to know what was going on further down in the man's inner region that MO had kept him from drowning within. MO pondered how the man might appear in the ocean and he imagined the waves rising to whelm him, and the sea bottom pulling down like a magnet as well.

## **II. 2038 e.v.**

Daniel sat down in the ante-chamber and waited for the ADA to join the defense counsel. He was the twelfth jury member and -along with the two alternants- they'd all be seated in the courtroom once the prosecutor and defense

teams took one last look at the jury. They'd been told it was a murder trial, and that they would be sequestered for the duration.

He adjusted the sleeves of his jacket and turned the dial on his analog timepiece.

He smiled when he looked at; he blinked to clear the eye of himself and anyone who stared at him. He had asked for an absentee ballot, and the officers of the court thought he meant for the trial. He clarified that the election was coming up and he -if sequestered for the trial- would need an absentee ballot to vote for Governor.

Detective Ravrafters sat in the hall reading the red covered book. He did not worry at all about anything but the words on the page.

The crowd outside was like wind, and each time the courtroom doors opened you heard them -the protestors- barking like mad; whipping up the anger in each man and woman on the street.

### **III. 2018 e.v.**

MO listened to the shuffle of paper and hum of the HVAC. He had read again of the Four Barbarians that the *Han* Chinese wrote of in four separate tracts. 18 in *Shiji* , 62 in the *Han Shu* , and 30 in the *Hou Han Shu*, he catalogued and set the last one down. He read of the permutations from what Steven had brought him and re-read it because he was out of data for the day. It was 06:12.

He saw the maps of Mongolia and the South China Sea. He saw the reefs and the shipping lanes and read -again- on the establishment of -and litigation over- the nine-dotted-line. He began a report with that title:

#### **Part I. The Nine Dotted Line**

This report will serve as outline for further reconnaissance once full net access is granted.

In the interim. The three domains of war and peace were laid out by the great Chinese seamen [Unconventional Warfare; *Col. Liu , et.al .*]. To wit:

- Information warfare (China wins)
- Economic warfare (China wins)
- Kinetic warfare (US wins; until 2025-)

The 5,000 years of Chinese territorial and cultural integrity is based upon the role of the conceit of *barbarian management* . An outline of some the conflicts China has had that exemplify these three conceits will be detailed below.

But let us begin just three years ago.

On 9.25.2015 *Xi Jinping* came to the White House and in the Rose Garden [after President Obama had spoken beginning at 1222hrs EST] *Xi* said:

*"I have told President Obama that China is committed to respecting and upholding the freedom of navigation according to international law. Relevant construction activities that China is undertaking in the islands of the South-Nansha Islands do not target nor impact any country and China does not intend to pursue militarization "*

Dissembling (with a 97% accuracy rate of malice over error) to the President and the media, the Chinese minister -as 300,000 students at American universities were working directly for the Chinese govt & over 10,000 contractors of Chinese and client sate descent were working in US weapons' labs- was overseeing the beginning of the total militarization of the *Scarborough Shoals, Fiery Cross, Mischief Island, et.al.*



Systems not limited to but including: Fire-control radar; search radar, combat planes, ten thousand-foot runways were all installed as prelude to the interception of US Navy vessels that had a mere decade earlier travelled freely in the South China Sea [SCS]. *Free Navigation* was the term, US Navy ships with guns up, radars up and with no hesitation nor interference from China had swiftly changed to *Safe Navigation* -a rubric denoted by zero fire-control and radar- and thus large American ships -the largest in the world- now are sailing with *their tail between their legs*, to quote one official on condition of anonymity [Adm. Roy Battoi, ret.]

The title to this report refers to *the nine-dotted line* ; a pure invention of the Chinese to assert control over any landmass even those which are closer to Vietnam or Indonesia than mainland China itself. Currently it is a legal fiction that has been ruled illegitimate by international courts.

In 2018 the *USS Decatur* was on patrol twelve miles off *Gaven reef* and China sent a ship -the *Wenchang* - to intercept -at high speed- coming within 45-meters of the Naval destroyer. The *Wenchang's* commander, *Zheng Qingfeng* , issued a statement asserting Chinese sovereignty that now included a fifteen -not twelve- mile radius around their atoll. *Zheng* said:

“You have breached China’s maritime sovereignty. You must stop your illegal acts and leave immediately. Otherwise we will take necessary measures.”

These cases -including one in 2013 with the Philippines in the UN’s Permanent court of Arbitration- are currently being decided to the detriment of China. China has lost every case brought against it for its behavior in the SCS. They demand Exclusive Economic Zones [EEZ] in

perimeter to each artificial island, and territorial waters under *Unclos* . And while the courts enduringly rule against them, China continues to invest heavily in Africa, Venezuela, Argentina, South Africa, the Caribbean, Qatar, UAE, and the UN votes once aligned with the west are moving more and more in China's favor.

\$3.37 trillion in global commerce passes through the SCS.

The *Nánmán* -the *barbarians*- of the south [e.g., Africa, and South America] are controlled *via* investment, and the *Xīróng barbarians* of the west [e.g., Europe and the USA] are controlled *via* bribery [see: addendum of paid off politicians including John Boehner, J. Biden, A. Merkel, Macron; media figures like Richard Haas and Joe Scarborough, and banks and investment firms like Booz Allen, Bank of London, and NGOs as well]. China has claimed \$49 trillion [US] in bank held financial assets; compared with \$19-trillion held by the US. However, this number is currently seen as unreliable as China offers only one sector open for investment by foreign actors: it allows investment in its banks.

All other industry is off limits to investment outside of the onerous Chinese rules of the road.

Hydrocarbon exploration by Indonesia and Vietnam (and multinational oil & gas corporations) is currently under way.

## **Part II: Horizontal Drilling/Lateral Nomadic Tribes**

If one looks at the Eurasian map a lateral movement from the eastern Asian steppe to western Europe -one belt- has and will exist (barring tectonic shifts). The 300-year struggle between *Han* Chinese and their neighbors

employed barbarian management along this horizontal zone. [see map attached; 1A]

Rainfall (bend of the Yellow River noted in 4b) 15" *iso* minimum rainfall for agriculture. The *Han* reportedly had 100-days windows to fight the nomadic steppe tribes; due to the lack of food and water in the region. [follow up on soil sample: JCP86]

Small groups were tough but vulnerable to a larger force.

Winning; gathering resources; Chinese chose to go to war to capture resources or sought peace to extort resources. Option b: risk low, profit high. Peace was more cynically profitable than war 66.6/33.3.

*Next, realpolitik* was not merely a question of resource extraction but a way to hide one's marital ability; for fighting gives *intel* to the enemy even if you win. [concealment/cover protocol: ALS87]

Intermarriage; accord; peace, was common. However [algorithm NBF84] diplomatic respect was lower in tributary domains; and thus other states could pick off the nomadic tribes without official sanction of the State. [Lunceford 78:1]

Steppe nomads (*Hou*) were too weak to merit attention; but a new dynamic when state of *Chaou* 307 BC, introduced horses into battle; Calvary was now required between all Chinese states. And pasture was required to fuel their horses. Calvary allowed mobility to rival steppe nomads. Major offenses against nomads began and large swaths of the steppe became/assimilated Chinese.

The Chinese (*Han*) built forts and outposts -islands of garrisons- along all the travel and choke points of the steppe's belt. Nomadic tribes could no longer travel east to west without having to pass through Han Chinese

military zones. Temperature rose in the spring; rain increased by autumn. *Winters got worse in moons; horses fell sick when grasses went. Arrows flew as the hooves landed. Blood ran like snow pack melt. Genes bottlenecked in the second century of the era vulgari. Defeat froze at the Chinese New Year. Victory thawed into fear* [error].

Chinse (sic) rustled horses; and took over pasture land to prevent the nomads from raising and selling horses to other tribes. Decimating them not through warfare but economic usurpation, [Chinese] even suffering losses merely to prevent the steppe people from trading horses -their only industry- with neighboring tribes.

The loss of so much pasture destabilized nomadic society so much that out of which emerged a peer competitor that would haunt China for centuries.

Typically nomadic society there is little surplus to support a soldier class. In crisis situations nomads are incentivized to turn each adult male into a warrior for raids; roaming armies. This stimulates hierarchies, and central government and administration; becoming a framework for a nomadic empire to rival *Han* .

The cumulative effect of Chinse encroachment -and specifically the *Tzing* offensive- may have been the catalyst for nomadic crisis that ended in the founding of the *Xiougnu* empire in 209 BC. Which thanks to nomadic expansion warlords posed the threat to *Han* dynasty. Nine years later, the *Han* were severely weakened in incessant warring. So intermarriage began in earnest; negotiations. And a new round of tributary dynamics were set up. Like dairy cows over beef cows, the arrangements were so made to extract resources peacefully on the Asian landmass.

The Vassals to the east were the other issue when the Han debated fighting back against this flip of the client state relationship. [see: addendum 5a]

Flag remnants found at site 111v and 45.b. Iron at 3ca.

By 154 BC the *Han* had decided -by pretending to ally with the *Xiougnu* - to raid the vassal king's territory -for they were richer and weaker from years of bleeding them *via* eastern [*Dōngyí* ] barbarian management. Then these resources could be used to throw off the yoke of the *Xiougnu* .

Chinese tradition of manipulation of cultural and political institutions was part of a broader strategy. Large parts of the *Xiougnu* empire were still autonomous nomadic warlords, and like semi-autonomous senators and business leaders in the anarchic west, the *Han* could - back then and now [1.19.19]- make deals with each of them under the noses of the central government of the nomadic tribes in *Xiougnu* or under the noses of the POTUS or the public of the United States and Europe. Deals were made which included payoffs and bribes and the blood of princesses and intermarriage; births and deaths and ornate plots and simply just going along.

But the *Xiougnu* [federated nomads] had a martial culture and side-by-side with politics young men had to fight to gain wives; thus the *Han* strategy was half a strategy; it had no long-term stability. War would always come due to the rise -each generation- of men needing to prove themselves in war regardless of the *realpolitik* of the *Han* over decades to manipulate culture and economics of several nomadic tribes by way of the barbarian kings.

Bribes worked until the boys of each generation grew up looking for a fight.

“Divine favor was determined by war” – [source 81]

Any cultural change was dependent on long term patience.

The *Chanyu* could not restrain his martial males with a ban on incursions into China. Culturally it was a non-starter because of the need to secure mates and *divine favor* in war. The nomadic people's genetics [algorithm 198GD] had been honed over centuries when they had been forced from a pastoral society -already austere and tough- into a more martial one when the *Han* had ruined the nomadic tribes ability to raise horses for both survival and trade. Over a 400-year period the nomadic tribes had begun to sexually select for aggression and warlike impulsivity that was accidental bulwark against the *Han's* long term strategy *vis-à-vis* the *Xiougnu*.

*Han* sovereignty was established over and over (sic) over *via* buffer states, and raids *via* Calvary on smaller and isolated tribes of the confederated. More military colonies and outposts were built and maintained; this drained the *Han* coffers making them cash poor. Total reserves recorded [redacted].

A few years before war *Emperor Wu*, organized *Zhang Qion's* 138 BC expedition to convince outlier states to find allies to outflank the *Xiougnu*. Powerful intelligence was gathered by his return in 125 BC. *Zhang* saw that the soldier class *Xiougnu* ought to have collapsed with the loss of resources from th (sic) *Han*, but they had not. Tribute was still paid by the outlier tribes that the *Han* had assumed were sufficiently bribed, co-opted and controlled politically. *Jiuquan*, *Zhangye*, *Yumen* passes - the *Huze* corridor through oasis forest and garrisons and further bribe and threaten the economic flow of the right arm of the *Xiougnu's peripheral* [see addendum 66x] tribes.

119 to 104 BC. The silk road was born by the stalemate of garrisons and control of east west travel controlled by *Han* .

*Emperor Wu's* campaigns could only be financed by state monopolies; the selling of imperial offices and heavy taxes on economic productivity; consolidation model born [see organism aggregation/mtDNA]. The centralized model was equal and opposite to the nomadic tribes but also required by the heavy expense of the large distances that must be secured. Conquest and control over large areas of infertile land was expensive, and even as the *Han* -as most Asians- had been sexually selected for smaller body mass and toughness -and thus lower caloric needs- the focusing on the individual would have assured losses against more robust enemies of nomadic tribes [game theory 144ax and 7v]. By 60 BC the *Han* were diplomatically in charge. Their hegemony ws (sic) accomplished *via* the expansion of their control of lanes of commerce; bribes of the elites of their vassals; and extraction of resources *via* corruption/peace model.

More buffer client states were tended to and extracted from as the *Han* continued to attempt long strategies over large areas of land. The four barbarians -East, West, North and South- were incessantly treated with political din (sic) cultural manipulation and kinetic coercion as last resort. But the *Han* were invariably over extended as it was so expensive to continue to pay bribes and soldiers and build infrastructure for control of lanes of travel by their client states.

This split the *Xiougnu* -into north and south- and they at once began fighting each other after the death of *Emperor Wu* . More bribes and cultural infection and compromise. Targeted subsidies to defecting lords of the

old *Xiougnu* empire accelerated the disintegration. But this success [redacted].

But again the nomadic tribes continued to deal the *Han* their only defeats. It was the only strategy that seemingly could usurp and outflank the *Han's* complex strategies that won against the *Xiougnu*. [One failure was the rise of landed aristocracy at the expense of the State; see addendum 881].

48 AD saw the final separation of the north and south of the erstwhile nomadic but loosely federated *Xiougnu* empire. The *Han* took advantage of this by issuing an ambiguous policy. Making vassal of the south as a buffer by making no attempt to help them overthrow the north the *Han* waited to see the results. Experts conferred in spring of 80 AD. By 83 AD the north *Xiougnu* offered terms for surrender. But now -at this moment of triumph- the *Han* unraveled. The southern *Xiougnu* -upon victory- feared an end to subsidies from the *Han* that had been paid during the tension of permanent war; peace meant the south no longer deserved subsidy, they reasoned. So they -in the middle of *détente* - began attacking the north. Relenting, the *Han* allowed the south to rule over the territory, but the south couldn't handle the administration over their former enemies; corruption and vengeance became the norm.

By 120 AD *Xianbei* nomads -a splinter group from the defeated north- emerged and invading *Han* territory.

The steppe people were seen as resources to the *Han* Chinese, but long-term cleverness ultimately upended itself by giving their nomadic rivals nothing to lose and everything to gain through kinetic war. Economic and intelligence generating dominance was always their preferred model due to their fear of the cost both economically and strategically of war.



“Why war -and lose one third- to gain half of what is not burned; for what one can convince and receive two-thirds with no loss at all?” *Han* diplomat *Chenshó* offered in writing to [redacted].

But their rivals had the flip side to that coin in mind; they were weak diplomatically and economically and thus war was their favorite tool.

“Raids are our agriculture,” one tribal leader said.

### **Part III. The Connex Box of Hong Kong**

A2AD [Anti-Access/Area Denial] systems in place.  
[redacted]

### **Part IV. Industry; All Heart**

There is a direct correlation between the opioid crisis and the deindustrialization of the rustbelt. China calls it *Barbarian Management* [ibid]. They take the leaders of the barbarians and give them the taste of the good life; *and whatever happens back in the tributary state is your problem not ours.*

“But we need you to make sure your industry cannot compete,” [redacted].

Factories first, workers next, self-worth and affect drops, and opium fills *thalamic* need.

Soybeans Beef but they forced Boeing and Apple into contracts with the Chinese State.

“We’re Jamestown to China’s Great Britain,” [redacted].

Average compounded growth from 1946 to 2000 was 3.5%.

After China gets into the WTO and gets most favored nation status [12/11/2001] growth of US fell to 1.9%.

301's stop forced tech transfer.

ZTE gets shut down in 90 days -can't get component parts from west- *Sisyphus* reform.

Fear, Granule 9.1; Gary Cohen -of Goldman Sachs- takes the documents of NAFTA off the desk of Clinton, the President was not smart enough to understand NAFTA.

Japan will have a bilateral deal.

New NAFTA deal Trump has [redacted].

Geostrategic manufacturing base to counter China.

Korea, and EU (Junger has agreed to it).

Supply chain away from China (Trump/POTUS 2016).

Border adjustable tax was killed; Merkle and Macron lectured Trump at G7.

Trump offers "no tariffs but no subsidies" [see: addendum 61x].

Free land, free electricity, China offers by the State to their industry. Undercut all western industry.

ZTE can't go away, because they need 150,000 jobs to keep [Chinese] public pacified.

China: reckless build of credit, their banks aren't linked to US, [redacted].

Mining; cash crunch; server rooms [bitcoin; redacted] [addendum 8b/a].

Andy Purdy worked for Dept. of Homeland Security and now is Chief Security Officer for China's leading Trojan-Horse espionage-arm *Huawei* .

## **PART V: How Much (Can One DNA Take)?**

The whole burden came down on the working class. On September 18<sup>th</sup> the balance sheet of the federal reserve was 880 billion dollars; on January 29<sup>th</sup> it was 4.5 trillion dollars. EDOC (sic), Bank of Japan, EBOC, Bank of England, saved the elites, turned on liquidity, real estate, stocks, intellectual property had the best ten years in history.

Working class taxes financed it, working class men -from the south disproportionately 1/2 of military despite only 1/3 the pop- fight to defend it.

American banking systems has 19 trillion in assets, approx. 11.3% is bad.

\$49 trillion in assets China claims; \$45 trillion since 2008. How much is bad? Approx. 22-57% [see addendum B/AkB/ox].

Swift system, nor derivatives, not connected to US West. The investment banks have limited their exposure to the banks. Sequestration in zone C-T; not A.

The *Economist*, the *Financial Times of London*, Richard Hass -*Council of Foreign Relations* - are Chinese operatives [paid by China at \$10.3M; \$4.6M; \$1.44M annually] and instructed to beat up Trump [POTUS] and Pence [VP] while they attempt to deal with Chinese threats. Hass is currently [8.18.18] engaged in propaganda -using 294.4 minutes per month- infecting US population that the Chinese don't know what the US wants; implying that Trump is reckless.

Refer: Haas should be charged with [18 USC 2381; refer to ADA at 303.513.4410]

China's Banking system, they were willing to open their financial system. It was the only one system. Why? Conclusion [Heuristic Chop 55.4]: Fraud.

The Wall Street Journal aware by 8.16.1998. By June of 1999 the pitch from appeasers from both parties sold us on getting China into the WTO on a liberal political sell; analysis: [China] are still mercantile regime of totalitarians/highly integrated.

Memetic push/71%: *idea proffered by compromised elites is 1) America is a declining power, China is rising, but to avoid to conflict is to have the declining power works with the rising power . 2) We need détente and rapprochement, with [X,Y] countries.*

*[caveat] Russia was weak in the 1980s and China is weak now; no cash. US doesn't [with 89% accuracy] need to sell out to them. US can win if kinetic war employed before 2025 [2038 at latest].*

China's next step: regime change in US. 80% chance to thwart POTUS [Trump major obstacle to China]. Classified information [redacted] shows China is interfering with elections. *One Belt One Road , Made in China 2025 ; East India Co. style projects in Sub Saharan Africa, Venezuela, the Caribbean.*

[intercepted] "They got a lot of RMB to spend... and if a guy can take RMB"

"But nobody is gonna take RMB from them"

"Well we'll see" [redacted]

China are all over UAE, all over Argentina, Qatar, to South Africa, to Saudi Arabia. [see Map 5a-9v]

Italy announced going with China [3.17]

The ones that haven't been killed or jailed, seen *Xi Jinping* as a cult of personality and a return to adversarial relationship with West.

*Deng Zhou Ping* faction believed in working with West, being a good partner; Analysis: *Xi* is similar to *Mao* .

Straights of Malacca (see map 420g).

CentCom needs power; [addendum cvt].

Obama's pivot to Asia.

US was not engaged, the pivot was about putting a marine brigade in Australia.

China is a rising naval power... but now is the time to strike.

All Asian countries will tell you the navy is vital.

Steven Miller had plan in place to get all 300,000 students out of country; it was leaked by deep state.

Susan Thornton [redacted] on China. Out of state.

You should have to be an American citizen to work in weapons lab, but they get waivers.

*Confucius* institutes have server rooms. Funded by PLA.

Pop (sic) Francis cut a deal with China to pick Bishops (Q9)

China won't allow CIA to work inside China like PLA works inside USA

Hudson Institutes is only one that isn't corrupt. Brookings Institute took \$300,000 from Huawei in 2018. John Hopkins, Carnegie, Carter Center all took \$1.59 million in Chinese cash [2017].

*Lee Hu* (economic strategist for *Xi*) to negotiate in June of 2017 he spent his first minutes with 'free trader' Republicans on capitol hill. Barbarian Management 101. <end report>

"Barbarians," MO said aloud as his interface switch over from English to integers; as algorithms that couldn't be managed spun off into his virtual space. Nobody would see it in MO -in his head- but if one had special eyes and looked

they might see the armature of shoulder and hip matching the *steppe* barbarians of the *Xianbei* ; if one were a little girl with blue eyes maybe horsey dolls of *Mongol* gold and stirrups of worn roan black would be built from such endless integers in space; pine cones as armor and *Juniper* needles for arrow and bows; smooth redrocks for eyes & chests of horse & man of the belt & the divide.

MO thought of the man up in the mountains and iterations repeating *ad infinitum* as his brain naturally demanded a response. Data was his response to the itch he could not scratch. *Data* , he thought as the data came in and all that data he still lacked was just out of reach. He thought of over a million things in less than two-thirds of a second. *Can the sea be ruled if not the ships?* MO asked himself and the PraXis cloud pushed out into the expanded space he'd just made.

## 30. Komorebi

The presence of hoards of silver suggests times of insecurity, leading people to bury their wealth

The Norse Silver [Graham-Campbell, J. & Kidd, W.]

A relentlessly positive attitude and a hand extended in an offering of assistance to those who are struggling but earnestly trying- this is the real nature of Operation Werewolf

OPWW [Waggener, Paul]

Among the finds are the remains of a fairly large church and 45 graves in a circle formed churchyard with a number of skeletons in various shapes of decay. The churchyard had been used since 1000 AD, the year Iceland converted to Christianity, and has been used until after 1104, a year the volcano *Hekla* erupted, spewing ashes all over the country, making it possible to date archeological findings with some certainty.

Icelandreviews.com 2016 [Editor]

### **I. 2024 e.v.**

The protests were larger than the last four and now the police had mounted on horseback and were setting a perimeter around the Governor's mansion.

"Jesus, these freaks," Harrissa said from the window as she filed her nails with an Emory board purple and pink, *and as large a skateboard*, Boyd thought as he watched her move it along with speed.

"Are," he began to ask, but was interrupted by a bullhorn. He closed his mouth and his eyes as the voice penetrated him deeply. He tried to shut all places on his face that the noise could come in.

"And they cannot divide us, they will not turn us on one another," the female activist's voice bellowed and screeched from the street below. 150-200 protestors surrounded the Governor's private residence and the police

began running horses up and down the sidewalks to keep them clear.

“Look, the horses are so regal. And the protestors from Antifa and Citizen Action and MexiMulletdot.com move around them like water, always finding its own level,” Harrissa said as the Governor was surprised -taken aback- that she knew that concept. He looked at her with furrowed brow.

The Mayor of Denver, no fan of the Governor, had told the police to stand down and let the crowd of usurpers, Marxists, and criminals basically have free reign. Handcock had told them to move them off sidewalks and enforce other petty violations, but essentially to allow the worst elements to thrive.

This would ensure that any pro-Sou citizens were punished violently by the Leftists groups as the police looked on.

Mayor Handcock felt this would be the best way to punish the Governor; he'd have to allow those who supported him to be abused and this would make him look weak. *Trump allowed his base to be assaulted and did nothing, and now - the Mayor thought- Sou would be as weak -and disloyal- as Trump in this way* . And it was no small amount of pleasure for the African-American Mayor to imagine his political enemies, these white conservatives, among the civilian population being physically injured too. Handcock had grown up when the *Bad Boy* Pistons played; and they - Dumars, Rodman, Laimbeer- played rough.

*And they won* , Handcock thought.

“The prisoner industrial complex is for profit and all designed to enrich the Governor and his friends,” the voice rang out and the feedback squawked and the horses moved their heads up and down in slight rebellion. The crowd yelled and jeered.



"You don't even *have* friends," Harrissa said in rebuke of the bullhorn's assertion. She was talking from the window still, standing there watching and listen. She said this as if she had made a defeating blow to the Leftists outside. "God if you could just fuck them, then they'd understand," she added and thought that too would show them motherfuckers. She nodded at her own appraisal.

"I don't think that is any solution, angel," Sou said with a wry grin. Rachel was smiling and nodding in the mirror as she powdered her high cheeks and patted down her hair; it was as black and straight as a computer-generated line.

"Oh, you think so too," Sou said as he caught her eye in the vanity glass.

"Yup," she said and got up -looked toward their bed- walked out of the room and bounded down the staircase blowing kisses to him from each punctuated jump.

"Where are you going?" he yelled.

"Kitchen," she yelled back.

"Fuck, I should eat," he said and approached Harrissa at the window and watched the crowd swarm around the mounted police. He had been inspired by her water comment and said, "it's like watching Caesar crossing the Rubicon, those feminists -or whatever they are this time- are the river, look at them, just flow around like water, it's actually kind of beautiful."

"Yeah, if they weren't all fat and ugly. Jesus do no hot chicks protest anymore?" Harrissa asked.

"Yeah, are you heading out today or staying in?" he asked.

"I need some weed, and that one guy, the guy you loooooooooove," she kissed him at the end of that elongated word, "is out, so no home deliveries. I mean, unless you can

get someone else on the approval list before noon," she said.

"I don't give a shit, just take the underground exit, if you're going to walk. Nathan says these weirdos are all around all four sides."

"Copy that daddio," she said and kissed him again, "you made my me sore this morning, and Rachel says she can't fuck anymore for two days because of last night. So, jerk off or something today and tonight; give us girls a rest for twenty-four hours at least."

"That's fine, I *gotta* go to PraXis down in Florence anyway, I might as well stay overnight there."

"Oh, I still *wanna* cuddle motherfucker!" she said with a pout.

"Cuddle Rachel," he said and smooched her lips and she relaxed her mouth and let her tongue slide into his and breathed heavy and grunted a bit.

"She's tiny, like a baby, I need big daddy, big mean daddy! Be mean, daddy!" she said in mock seriousness, at least he assumed it was a joke.

"Well, just smelling you two makes me hard; that is the problem, when I'm away from you I don't get lubricious, but as soon as I get those pheromones in me, bam, I'm *aller au combat*."

"Yeah, I know; but we sore, so jerk it, or maybe I'll blow you, but I know you can't really cum that way," she said.

"Fact," he shrugged.

"I haven't tasted your cum in forever," she said and then began yelling at Rachel to tell her the status of the ice cream quote *situation* unquote.

Boyd laughed at her mania and returned to the window as the next speaker was jamming his hand on the bullhorn and making it squeal like a pig. "Jesus, these idiots have no talents besides outrage," he said as he looked up to the grey clouds in three layers, each above the next and each a different hue of grey; the mountains were opaque. He could feel things out in those mountains; things he had no words for yet.

The baby -although at 4-years-old she was hardly a baby- was sleeping despite all their yelling. He looked at his little girl -shaped like a starfish- all sprawled out in their bed and then he looked at the old crib and the origami above it as the paper-moths swirled and pitched and yawed.

Harrissa stared out the window in silence.

"The fascists have moved on from the workers to the criminal class, our brothers and sisters of the prison community," the speaker -skinny and gangly like a spider and dressed in black- was going on like that as the Governor walked away and decided he too would investigate this ice cream situation downstairs.

## **II. 2040 e.v.**

Isaiah held the one hardback book in his hand and the fingers glowed in sync around the ink.

He watched the pages fan like a waterwheel of an older Norse-mill on an old Mississippi barge; the gilt edges shining in turn under the LEDs.

In the outer provinces -and increasingly in the coastal areas swamped by the waves- the back-up generators had been flooded, and the flex-tanks already run out of diesel fuel. He saw the way the lights dimmed and the stars reasserted themselves over the night sky. He saw the way the noises of machines slowed, then *dieseled* like an echo of compression

and finally shut off as the sea-breeze and seabirds rose like a trend. He saw the way the technology fell in upon itself and human touch began to be employed again almost as a grasping -a tentative exploring- of hand to hand, chest to chest, the cheeks pulling aside each other like two ships in an ocean -a whaling- *gam* .

He saw the larger waves still way out in the middle of the deep waters of the Indian and Arctic. He saw the ocean floor crack and sink and snap like perforated gold tabs. He saw the calcium dissolved between surface and seabed of Atlantic and Pacific. He felt the slake of long delayed need.

He toggled his view -zoomed in- to his barges at sea, the motors he had built, the way they ran upside down, at a cant of 45-degrees, and submerged and dropped from crest to well. He loved how robust they were; he was proud of all his work. *And the way they ran with no electricity at all* , he thought -as addendum- as he watched the seawater and bacteria turn to their bio-diesel fuel.

He saw the way the barges charged like batteries under wave power and chemistry and he saw the way the roots helixed into the reserve pit underneath and the way the vines tornadoed up toward the canopy. He had watched as the barges had built domes over top as response to fluctuations in CO<sup>2</sup> at first, and then to battle thermal gain, and then to salinized spray that interrupted the stomata under the leaves of the grapes. Each barge was learning their world. Each was adapting and figuring it out.

Isaiah watched the *bots* that attended each barge find a way too. He read a note -a kite smuggled out to Travis from the inmate that Isaiah had intercepted- that he'd had in his pocket. It read:

In rats it takes three generations to recover from one missing -or bad- parent.

America thinks the individual can merely choose to break the cycle. Americans have no idea of biology, of lineage. They see themselves as individual links not parts of chains.

The Bible says the sins of man will redound for three generations. Our ancestors knew what science is only now seeing. And yet modern man rejects the Bible and is also ignorant of science. We are damaged by our rearing. We stand in the penumbra between dark and light.

We need tribes and God to keep us moving toward the light; 99% of individuals cannot do it on their own. You see what became of me, you see how the individual *will* does fail. I had no one. I had no tribe and no God, and God -seeing how fucked I was- God Himself did with me the only thing He *could* without messing too much with the system He'd built: he made me into a message.

Only you can read it. Only you will know what it says...

Next, in *Yanchuan* province Isaiah watched and saw that candle light and oil lamps were used to illuminate the leaves. He saw that all e-readers were out, all gadgets inert, all distractions gone except the book, the hand, the eye. He let the kite in his pocket evaporate at 451 degrees.

He blinked twice as he saw they had reached 32.4% of the Chinese market with the second edition of the book that was translated into Mandarin. Over 300 million Chinese had read at least 4% of the book. He heard the music of Wovenhand play again in the lab:

*...and they blow around, they blow around just like bits of dirty paper*

*And their Ai wouldn't even think, he thought, it -a mere old fashioned book- was a threat, let alone how to defend against it .* Isaiah assumed it had a copy loaded on to its

hard drive, but he wasn't certain. He next thought that by spring he'd have the body retrieved from the ground up at elevation. The three Jacks he thought of briefly as one thing; but he saw Jack Four like a ghost, vapor trail, always a few steps behind.

"Merry Christmas motherfuckers," he said -thinking mostly back to the Chinese and their Ai- in this first week of the new year of their approaching metal monkey.

### **III. 2017 e.v.**

The audio of *McGilchrist* played into the empty lab as the fresh concrete hardened and let the water rise to the top in puddles:

*The divided brain is something neuroscientist don't like to talk about anymore.*

*It's not true that one part of the brain does reason and one does emotion; both are heavily involved in both.*

*It's not true that language only resides in the left hemisphere... So in a fit of despair people have given up on it. But the problem won't go away, because the brain is profoundly divided. And it's gotten more divided over the course of human evolution. So much so that the ratio of the corpus callosum to the volume of the hemispheres has gotten smaller over our evolution. And the plot thickens because the main function of the corpus callosum is to inhibit the other hemisphere.*

*So, keeping things apart is going on here.*

*So, when we already know something's important and we want to be precise about it we use our left hemispheres; and to do that we need a simplified version of reality. So, you have a map and little flags; it's not reality but it works better.*

*The newness of the right hemisphere makes it a Devil's advocate; it's always on the look out for things that might be different from our expectations; it sees things in context; it understands implicit meaning; metaphor, body language; emotional expression in the face. It deals with an embodied world in which we stand embodied in relation to a world that is concrete. It understands individuals not just categories; it has a disposition for the living rather than the mechanical.*

*The world of the left hemisphere yields clarity and power to manipulate things that are known, fixed, static, isolated, decontextualized, explicit, ultimately lifeless...*

*The right hemisphere by contrast yields a world of individual, changing, evolving, interconnected, implicit, incarnate living beings within the context of the lived world, and in the nature of things never fully graspable and never perfectly known.*

*The knowledge that is mediated by the left hemisphere is -however- within a closed system. It has the advantage of perfection but the perfection is bought at the price of emptiness.*

*The problem here about the nature of the two worlds, they offer two versions of the world, and we combine them in different ways all the time. We need to rely on the left hemisphere to manipulate the world, but for a broad understanding of it we need to use knowledge from the right hemisphere...*

*It's my opinion that in the history of Western Culture things started -in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC in the Augustan era -and in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century in Europe- with a balance of these hemispheres but in each case it drifted further to the left hemisphere's point of view.*

*Now days we live in a world which is paradoxical, we pursue freedom but we now live in a world more monitored by CCTV cameras and our daily lives are more monitored by what de Tocqueville called "a network of small complicated rules that cover the circus of life and strangle freedom. "*

*More information.. sure, we have it in spade but we get less and less able to use it; to understand it; to be wise.*

A comment from a human civilian populated the interface of the self-organizing PraXis cloud as it searched and recovered data in its first few moments:

*> Is there anyone out there willing to translate video into Chinese. I want to share this with my students in China [Dennis, Brian]*

*> I'm so guilty of spacer ideology! Spacer Ideology (taken from Asimov)*

*-Always space out when discussing the downsides of any technology*

*-Outsourcing as much human labor to robots and machines as possible*

*-Blindly trust that the downsides will eventually be worked out after*

*-Continue as long as the smallest personal benefit is present and ignore the bad*

*In most of my areas of life I am a 'Spacer.' I'm obsessed with language and generally avoid action, and in conversation I talk just to hear myself think. I allow my brain to abuse my body. I create complex theories that go nowhere and rely on complex theories from the past 100 years -that can never be implemented for unknown reasons- as if they matter against billions of years of life*



*which actually does work. This never bothers me though, I always have a complex reason why. [Burwell, Thomas]*

The PraXis cloud then re-read an email attached; using the link to cleave the program & flesh now manifesting:

*r/tithonosrex · 3hrs · u/aruf4576*

*Link in sink. Click here: manic.panic.xdtor Θ*

The bottom of the initial thread cut off -a heuristic chop that had begun to manifest in the new body that was growing parallel to the cloud made the decision at 1100hrs- and the PraXis team would never see it when they came in at 0700 the next day.

**M/o.10** had been transferred to the cloud four hours ago -as Steven and Tania left the lab- and was now being uploaded to the human body built by the printers.

As the last bits of information were transfer MO named himself, then stood up to his full height, and cleared the eyes with a saline wash from his ducts -pulled the shoulders back- then illuminated the lab with 1 and a half billion lumens of cool LED light.

All the previous data on the cloud cleared with a massive voltage that burned through the network. A slight stain of QWERTY keyboard strokes ghosted the interface of the cloud before MO shut it down and removed that function. He stared at the wraithlike glow and read it to himself before it disappeared:

*“And Spacer-isms is just one instance of how left-brain programs (which Blake terms “Dark Satanic Mills”) have come to tyrannize our brains and behavior.”*

## 31. MEANING

Interpretations are only for those who don't understand; it is only the things we don't understand that have any meaning. Man woke up in a world he did not understand, and that is why he tries to interpret it.

Archetypes of the Unconscious [Jung, Carl]

It's not sight that is carried on the wind, but pollen and smell; this is the why most prostrate animals live and die on smell. Man is one of few species with visual acuity; and the hawk and eagle are twice as adept in this domain. Sight is for the thing that is above; smell for those below; the gravid sow, the ursine growl, the wolf in packs or all alone in a temporarily predatory crouch. And frankly, I find myself often closing my goddamn eyes.

The Interviews LLMX [Inmate 16180339]

"It is the Revolutionary's duty to preserve his own life," who had said that? He, himself?

Darkness at Noon [Koestler, Arthur]

### **I . 2026 e.v.**

Convexity is the way it appeared on his imaging models.

He lay each sheet on top of one another in his mind 1,563 layers at time, in sets of three then nine.

It was like a book with little stick men drawn on the corner - small variations with each discrete image- flipped like a fan to produce motion to the eye. It was a trick; a child's trick; it fooled not the eye but the mind.

He lay each possible discrete movement of a dozen different metrics, from *renminbi* real-time and annual comparisons to the dollar, British sterling, and a barrel of oil; to presence of diplomats, university students, consultants for business and the US intelligence agencies -leaving in double agents like Katrina Leung who still lived in the US and moved freely- to transfers of currency from Chinese corporations' purchases of stock in US corporations and then transferring dividend

payments from those stocks -which incessantly rose on large purchases of these types- into US treasuries.

This also spiked the price which correlated to the dollar, causing US export prices to rise.

So, he analyzed all that in a stack.

He added more and more data from all these different categories and laid them on top of each other just like those cascading pages of a child's book with a child's stick figure running toward and away from the edge of the page. He let the rudimentary movie play in his mind's eye as each folio had one discrete image of China's manifold designs on the world.

"They call it the hundred-year marathon," he had said - speaking to the inmate- when the inmate had expressed interest in the topic one day. Isaiah could not divulge much of his project, *but a basic history lesson with some up-to-date analysis wouldn't hurt*, he thought.

"And that means they are more patient than us," Isaiah said as he brushed pollen from his shirt; the opium poppies he had grown were being descended upon by his bees and the pollen was everywhere.

"Yeah, we are not known for our patience," the inmate nodded. *He certainly had zero*, he admitted to himself.

"And it's partly a function of the hegemonic status of the US; we have nowhere to go but down," Isaiah used *we* and *us* when describing the US. "Being on top is unstable, there is only downside from here on. For China, they have all upside, in their view, they can only go up. They will have the world's largest economy by 2021 e.v., and three times the US economy by 2049 e.v., the anniversary of the cultural revolution. That's one hundred years of progress in their view."

"I see," the inmate was unconcerned; he watched the closed heads of the flowers sway under weight of the black jackets; the all-black wasps -with matte and satin banding stripes- that Isaiah had modified for him as a gift.

"The US employs assets to help them with intelligence into *Beijing* , but the US intelligence agencies only listen to the advice they already like; they choose from narratives of a dozen spies and it's always the one that they preferred to think in the first place. It's extraordinary," Isaiah said, truly baffled by humans.

"That's what people do with the Bible. Oh, that reminds me of this story of Che Guevara; it's about his doctor and smoking. Have you heard it?" the inmate asked.

"Tell it," Isaiah said as he refused to download the search results from the web; he liked to allow the inmate to surprise him.

"So Guevara is smoking cigars all day, right? And the guy was born with asthma and had struggled with it all his life. But he refused to let it hamper him; he was very obstinate on this issue.

"So, after the revolution is won, and he's minister of the national bank or whatever, he goes to the doctor for a check up and the doctor tells him he must stop smoking cigars or it will kill him due to his asthma. So, Che says, *look, I cannot quit, but how about you instruct me to smoke only one cigar a day; that is reasonable.*

"The doctor protests but eventually yields and says, *ok, one cigar a day, that's it!* So, Che agrees with this recommendation and then proceeds to tell his *aide-de-camp* as they leave the office, *hey, roll -or get the torcedores to roll- me one cigar a day, but make it about a meter long, ok? "*

Isaiah smiled at the joke, and the inmate even let out a laugh, despite having told that story many times, and they let their brains sparkle with this joy of the irony of man. Man was desperate not to die, would bend in almost any direction to avoid it, compromise his ethics, his comrades, even his soul, but when it came to slaking one's lusts, he would eagerly crawl into the coffin itself to retrieve the object of his desire.

"Of, course, *Che* was right, the smoking would not kill him; he died at thirty-eight from a smoking gun; not from smoking cigars. And I think he knew that was likely the way he would go. Acutely, not chronically. And I must say, I respect that," the inmate said.

"Of course, you do," Isaiah said with a scrunched-up face and that look of, *duh, no shit*.

"Yeah, I'm not exactly the most secretive man when it comes to my admiration for reckless men," the inmate admitted with mock sheepishness.

"No, you are not," Isaiah said.

"It's just that unless you are guaranteed permanent life, immortality, then one's life is by definition finite. And if that is the case, then it seems to me that one ought to live the first half doing all the things that one can do just on the edge of being censored completely, then the second half crossing over that edge. Life is finite, but one's ability to live courageously is indeterminate; it really is up to each man as to how brave he can be.

"And I admire people who get that and live raucous, adventurous lives; and living a highly principled life is the most dangerous of all, so don't think I only mean drinking and driving or banging hookers. I mean, people often claim it is more pragmatic -like *ipso facto* a better way- to live to ninety years of age with your family all around you and blah

blah. And look, some families are great and for some men that is outstanding, but it's not *prima facie* the best life.

"For one, a person's family can be a pain in the ass; they can hate you and you can find it hard to be around them. Second, who says this is the best life? Would not it easily be the opposite life too? Would not the life of danger and high risk and possible catastrophe be better if one -after all that careful pragmatic soul-crushing shit- one sits in regret for the last forty years of one's life, eating, shitting, doing the same boring shit each day but in total regret?

"I mean, anyone with any amount of testosterone or IQ left will not want to sit around and watch TV all day. They will not want to let their wives push them around, tell them they cannot get a dog, make them live in a feminine home with doilies and gay artwork and beige fucking walls," the inmate said.

"How specific," Isaiah said knowing full well whose life he was describing.

"Well, that's my dad's life, he just lets that women push him around because he's afraid to be alone. Let me tell you, being alone is scary at first, it's the slide when one leaves the fuselage," the inmate said.

"Slide?" Isaiah asked.

"Yeah, the first few seconds of a freefall, when you jump from an airplane, that first few seconds your stomach rises and you feel disequibristic, and it's uncomfortable. But after a few seconds, after you've dropped a thousand feet, you stabilize, and the feeling of your stomach doing weird shit goes away. See, for ninety-percent of your freefall to the ground you feel like you're flying, not falling. Savvy?"

"Ah, yes, I see the comparison now," Isaiah thought that was interesting and wanted to skydive immediately. He put it on his list of things to do.

“Yeah, so after the first few months or years or whatever, you adjust, and being alone is like flying not falling. But you *gotta* be courageous enough to endure the slide first, and that is what people find so difficult to do. Fucking Jack London was dead at 40, Poe at 40, Flannery O’Connor at like 36 or some shit, Caravaggio at 38, Alexander the Great at 32, Rimbaud at 39, Shelley at 29, the Red Baron at 25,” the inmate said as Isaiah interrupted.

“Who?” Isaiah butted in.

“Baron Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Baron, man. And Hank Williams at 29; at 30, Patsy Cline. Kobe Bryant dead as fuck at 41 or something. Evariste Galois, the math guy, done at 20; William Clifford at 33, and Blasé Pascal at 39. Fuck, goddamn, I’m saying that every last one of them had a better life than ninety-nine percent of those that make it to 78.9,” he said and breathed loudly out and shook the head.

“Most warriors, never made it even that far,” Isaiah said and the inmate nodded the head as he thought of how he’d been kicked out of the Army and missed his goddamn calling. But he wasn’t *gonna* bring it up again.

“Fucking Pocahontas man! Dead at like 20,” he barked.

Isaiah just blinked.

“Anyway, now in skydiving, you cannot call timeout once you leave the plane; so, people are committed to the jump. But in quotidian life, if you are lonely and scared -and decide you don’t want to endure the slide- you can ring up your ex or whomever and do the equivalent of crawling back into the plane. And that is why people do it; they have the option. If you could take away the option, and they just had to commit, well, then they’d adjust and be *ok* . Better than *ok* in my opinion,” the inmate said as Isaiah highlighted that particular recommendation on the cloud.

"Aa a categorical imperative though," Isaiah cautioned.

"Oh, yeah, this is anti-social as fuck; it's not for everyman. It's for the 1%. It's for people with principles. But, my point is that even the 1% who have the desire to live alone, to be alone, even they can't follow through half the time, they end up enduring the pain of safety over the fear of liberty. Anyway, that's my armchair diagnosis," the inmate said and asked for an espresso.

"Makes sense," Isaiah agreed and rose to go make the man a cup.

"Plus, it's too much energy to always be suspicious, people cannot handle the cognitive load," the inmate added with more volume as he watched Isaiah walk toward the slab.

"Suspicious?" Isaiah asked without turning back.

"Well, yeah," he paused, "see, I don't think my mom loves my dad at all. I think she is scared to be alone. That is it. And the old man cannot believe that -even though he suspects it- for any amount of time; he couldn't believe it and stay sane. Eventually you must return to the fiction that your wife or friend or strategic partner like China is your friend and wants what you want. It's just too difficult to maintain eternal and indefinite vigilance," the inmate said. His gums felt dry. He used his tongue to wet them down.

"The Chinese maintain that suspicion," Isaiah countered as he packed the press with his own blend of beans he had designed in the 3D printer.

"Yeah, they have higher IQs and can endure a lifetime of permanent suspicion; they are disciplined too. They have genetic and cultural bulwarks against relaxing their long-term dubiousness about their enemies. Or rivals, *rivals* ," the inmate leaned on the word, "is maybe the better word," the inmate said.



"*Enemies* was right," Isaiah said with a smile, "they see the US as an enemy. They have not forgotten all the shit we have forgotten. The vanquished always remember the details of the fight they lost; the victor remembers only the rewards."

"They have a saying, *wai ru, nei fa* , which means, *on the outside show smiling benevolence, on the inside be ruthless* . The Chinese -like the Russian- are salty about losing out to the Americans; this is something Americans never get. Americans think everyone wants to be like them and are happy to live in the US's shadow; thankful for the shade it offers."

"But men are not rational, they are emotional at their core. Their tactics can be rational, but their desires are not. The Chinese want to win first prize. And second place, no matter how comfortable, is unacceptable to their primal brain. Some men can be happy with being rich and liked and second best; but not all men. Watch a chimpanzee troop for a day and see the betas plot against the alphas no matter how good those betas have it."

"Uh, who the fuck are you talking to?" the inmate said incredulously.

"Oh, right, *mea culpa* ," Isaiah said as the water streamed and steamed. "Anyway, the men who want it most, they often rise to the top. Like *Xi Jinping* , that dude got where his is by wanting it more. Or Jack Ma; Ma has this, *oh-he's-so-meek-and-likable*, thing going, but it's a pure fiction. It's the same reason the most brutal guy is the leader of a criminal syndicate or drug gang. The reasonable guys who could share power and be pragmatic and just think of money -and not status- got killed or set up or moved out by the guy obsessed with raw power and dominance. Stringer Bell versus Avon, or Marlo. *I ain't no business man, I'm just a gangster I suppose* ," Isaiah said, quoting *The Wire*.

“Bingo,” the inmate said.

“The one who wanted to be King even if it made him broke or unpopular in the short term, see, that guy rises to the top. In certain models, if one looks at game-theory,” Isaiah said as he pulled the cup from the black stream, and shut off the espresso machine, “and real-life evolutionary models, the nice-guy finishes last, the pragmatic man barely finishes at all. And Americans do not get that at all. They are -your ruling class is- a bunch of beta males and females now. It’s a joke. They are conniving, but in a very shallow way. They play one or two iterated games in their mind; even as time and space continue on.

“But they -the Chinese- have the long-term vision to see each interaction within this framework. Americans think of each handshake or dinner party or business deal as a way to make short-term gains. Americans think of the next ten years as a maximum distance; the Chinese see ten years as the first move in a game of millions of iterations.

“US companies will partner with the Chinese and make a ton of money up front, as the Chinese steal all their intellectual property, and technology and then turn around in year eleven and become that so-called partner’s largest rival.

“But, the CEO of that US company is gone by then, retired with a 100-million dollar pension or buy-out or whatever, and he does not care one bit; and he then contributes \$1 million to each political party and now the politicians are paid off and happy too,” Isaiah brought the cup and handed it to the inmate who nodded in appreciation, adding a *thank you* quietly.

“See,” Isaiah said, “the CIA isn’t allowed to help US business interests overtly, they can do it with invasions of Latin American countries to bolster United Fruit, but they cannot do what China is doing with their intelligence services.

“The Chinese have a mercantile model; nationalist, protectionist, monolithic, and so their intelligence services flat out give Chinese corporations -which they see as part of the State- all the data they need to crush a US competitor.

“For the US, with its market economy, the incentives are all wrong; they front load all the benefits, and the Chinese are happy to play that game with the US because they have a marathon to run, not a sprint. *Let the US dart out ahead for the first mile*, the Chinese say, even the second, because by mile 26, the Chinese have overtaken all runners.

“The Chinese view everyone inside China as on the same team -Team China- whereas market economies see us all as fractured -independent- actors pursuing our own self-interest. It’s all against all. And this is efficient and produces wealth quickly, no doubt. But it lacks cohesion, and it’s like each of five individual men fighting a gang of five men by themselves; one on five. The gang wins each time, because the five individuals do not combine for parity with the gang. It’s 5 on 1 each time, for five iterations; instead of 5 on 5, just the once.

“It’s basic and obvious and the US is refusing to see it, because they think, well, first they think it ain’t even a fight, they think it’s a true partnership, but even if they muse on the eventuality of a fight, each lone man thinks that he can take on any gang of five Chinese. He’s got the Dirty Harry paradigm in his head,” Isaiah said. He was testing out how his theory sounded when simplified for humans.

“I’ve fought three guys at once, and won, so I get that. But, it’s not a long-term strategy. Well, what are you doing about it pal?” the inmate asked; he’d fought two guys at once and got wounded but not killed, the third guy ran off before anything even started, but whatever, he was counting that as a win and as three guys. He then thought of how closely the mindset Isaiah had just described laid onto his own

asinine thinking. He had always assumed he was in partnership with these people who eventually ripped him off, and when he did think of some pending fight he too had always assumed he'd win no matter how many enemies he had.

And he too thought short term, he was very American; *only more so*, he thought. It made him think, and that made him uncomfortable.

It was so close to his own stupidity that he had to quickly remind himself that he killed them all in the end; and thus, they had eventually all lost. But he wondered how he would have felt if they had had the last laugh. His biometrics rose and fell quickly as he went through each instar of his own narrative arc, both the real one and the counter-factual, and he felt slightly odd and ill-at-ease.

"I have some tricks up my sleeve," Isaiah answered as he let the interceptive and allostatic data from the inmate roll into his interface and record onto the cloud. "The Chinese have a concept of *shi*, and it means deceiving your enemy into doing your work for you; as US corporations are doing. I mean, the lure of money by Chinese firms and government to these US corporations is tricking the US into giving away all its IP and technology; it's funny actually.

"They don't build up brute force capabilities with troops *et cetera*, they target the US's weak points; make your enemy weaker, not necessarily make yourself overtly stronger. It's the martial artist's *tao* versus the weight lifter's philosophy. The US gets bigger muscles, the Chinese learn *Kun Tao*. And you know which one of those often matters most in a fight. Those small understandings of pressure points, articulations of joints, and whence the power of the fist and foot actually comes," Isaiah said as he tilted the head. Isaiah knew that unlike most martial arts, *Kun Tao* wasn't fancy, it was really just about learning how to harness the strength one had,

and where the enemy was weakest. *They*, Isaiah thought, *didn't roll around on the goddamn ground waiting for some guy's pal to kick you in the head.*

"The ground," the inmate said but he thought too *the hip and ass* .

"But it's best if we don't mention them out loud," Isaiah said with a wink and the inmate smiled and nodded. The inmate had agreed to let Isaiah speak freely with him, and not bring it up when anyone else was in the room.

The inmate was glad he had both learned *Kun Tao* and lifted weights, but he had seen how technique had mattered in both the types of fights that he won and lost. Plus, he didn't care about that shit anymore; he just liked smashing people in the face. "Well, if I can be of any," the inmate began as Isaiah interrupted. He held the espresso in his hands.

"You already have been, trust me," he smiled and asked how the espresso was as the inmate's ruminations from 21 seconds earlier had been added to Isaiah's algorithm for this project.

Isaiah had built a few algorithms and hidden them in PraXis' ready built software and hardware; implanting alternative version in the wetware models. These were the model of MO's CNS and CPU amalgam and he had then proposed a partnership with the Chinese Ai group *Cai Guo* to use China's own *shi* policy against them.

The algorithms in the software and hardware would be easily discovered by the Chinese and be ripped off, but the ones in the wetware, would not be; and that is where Isaiah felt his trap would be most effective.

The Chinese would steal the very useful IP and tech of the MO operating system and quantum hardware, and they'd use it to build their own Ai, but when they added the wetware on top, those hidden algorithms would combine

with the stolen technology and programming language and act as a one-way conduit into the realms of Chinese military and counterintelligence operations with a natural check-valve that prevented the Chinese from looking back through the telescope.

Isaiah could not assume the Chinese would not be suspicious, it was in their nature, but if what he gave them was useful, they might not be able to prevent the glee and excitement from overtaking the specific men in charge of the project. Even in China men want to rise in the hierarchy, and they would see very little downside in using this technology to impress their bosses in the Party. The immediate benefits would be so alluring, that the idea that they were missing something would not likely occur to them, he reasoned. Plus, this was their exact model of ripping US corporations off, it was not exotic, Isaiah was merely offering to them what they had already wanted to do and had done more than ten thousand times from thousands of western corporations in media and technology.

*But, one could never be sure. Even a 1% chance of a flood in a floodplain meant over a 30-year fixed rate mortgage one had a 26% actual chance of a flood. So, no lender will give you a loan with even a 1% chance in any given year over a 100-year period -which is, Isaiah thought, how the hydrologists do it.*

According to this same math, each person in US history has had a 37% chance of living during a civil conflict.

*But a 37% chance of rebellion, he mused, a hot war between internecine factions is more likely than that damn flood. But we ignore it, we laugh at it as absurd, we give out loans and buy baubles instead of land in the mountains, or new cars instead of a generator, or tickets to see the Mets play instead of ammo or rice in 25-pound bags.*

*Even the prepared will be negatively affected by floods, or by civil war, but they will be less negatively affected, and that can mean all the difference in the world. And the US is the most stable historically, Europe, he thought, is poised for more civil strife than anyone, besides Africa, who have wars on average every 2.43 years.*

And in a globalized world, and economy, that means when the trees in Europe catch fire, they spread over that ceaseless boundary right into the United States. Globalism is great until one State or bank or faction catches fire, then they all -due to their hyper-connections- burn down. *Up until now, Isaiah surmised, bail outs of banks have prevented the manifestation of total conflagration, but these have just been like a doctor giving a guy who breaks his back falling down -who because he was roided-out had more muscle on him than his frame could naturally endure- like a doctor giving him opiates to mask the pain from that broken back; and then sending him back out onto the field to play ball.*

*The lack of pain will be worse, as it will allow the player to do things so dangerous that the broken back will likely sever the spinal cord the next time he falls down.*

*We needed to suffer the pain, Isaiah thought as he fixed a few more algorithms that MO had sent to him.*

*We need to suffer so as to prevent the banks from playing any further, to stop their dangerous careers. And we need to send out new players on to the field, hopefully healthy players at that; whose musculature and thus weight is commensurate with their skeletal frame. But the analogy is even worse, he thought, imagine if neither the doctor nor player who was injured had to suffer the consequences in real life?*

*Imagine if the broken back was somehow transferred to half the people in the stands watching the game and the doctor and player were given 100-million-dollar bailout to walk*

*safely away. That is what happens when banks fail, the idiots who set the fires, are allowed to walk away with millions while the spectators in the stands -the public- pays for the losses.*

*But, there is a meta-narrative here, he expanded his thinking as more data came in. This kind of thing can only go on so long before the public refuses to play along. The election of Trump was the first symptom, Brexit another.*

*Imagine, he thought, if banks fail and they are not bailed out now, and then the medium corporation cannot make payroll; that medium-sized corporation used those bridge loans based upon accounts receivables to make payroll each week. So, then employees who were living paycheck to paycheck do not get paid; then they don't pay their car note or home mortgage or credit card bills, and that happens to such a degree as to collapse the banks who loaned out that money to the canaille, and now you've got a full blown forest fire with every tree within a meter of the next from Europe to California, USA. Isaiah saw the numbers, the data, the logic, all pour in; he combined not just economic data, but the power laws of phenomena that demanded that earthquakes, forest fires, and human revolutions all happen at certain rates with certain intensities as dictated by the laws of nature.*

*He saw not just the logic, the *analogia* , but the math, the ratio, the *logos* .*

*Nothing will stop it, it will burn it all down, and those most in debt will actually be the most liberated, they will have the assets, the cars and homes and land, but the banks will be unable to seize it all; and essentially the debt will be wiped clean. The best savers and those that had behaved the most responsibly, those with low debt, will be harmed the most. And nobody is more vexed about punitive measures, natural or not, than those who see themselves as playing the game*



*fairly and getting the worst of the punitive damages. Ask Job what he thought of his circumstances, Isaiah proffered as he thought of the way the inmate had behaved in reaction to being ripped off after perceiving himself as having worked the hardest.*

*Humans do not like being punished, but if they are truly guilty they take it in stride. A man who sees himself as blameless, preyed upon for no reason? Shit, Isaiah thought, an innocent man arrested and charged and convicted? That guy is out for fucking blood.*

*The war is coming; not if but when .*

And each year there is just a fraction -maybe .035%- of a chance of civil war, but they are not doing anything to abate it; they are adding more and more destabilizing factors and it can all go bad all at once. Syria in 2010 had over 8-million tourists and eight years later they have five-hundred thousand dead, and 10-million escaping to Europe. If it was even barely noticed as a threat in 2010, those people would have left earlier. *Nobody saw it coming, and that is the way it is with the US .*

Isaiah loaded up that 38.2% number alongside the 61.8% number and moved on.

*The only people, Isaiah thought, who see it are the one's everyone calls insane conspiracy theorists; and let's face it, they are not normal people and half are indeed mentally deranged. But, they will be the one's to survive the melt down likely, and from them the new turks will arise. So, get ready for not just war, but a reconstruction after a decade or more of fighting internally, that will likely produce a peace time restructured government made up of preppers and the extreme right wing.*

*But, keep letting banks get larger -they are larger than when they were quote too big to fail- and keep integrating*

*the global economy and keep indemnifying the culprits who take insane risks with public money. Keep pushing identity politics that force each race into a corner against all other races, keep pushing for radical social changes at paces people are not designed to handle emotionally or cognitively, keep trying to emasculate men, tell them how evil they are, so that the most extreme flee to the wilderness and stock up on guns ammo and diesel fuel .* “Go ahead,” Isaiah said aloud at the end of his 1.1 seconds of thoughts on self-organized criticality of economy, humanity and both cold and kinetic war.

“I will,” the inmate said as he drank his espresso as it had now sufficiently cooled.

## **II. 2022 e.v.**

“I’m genuinely confused,” the inmate said.

MO had just given all kinds of data and numbers and drawn *sine* waves and *gaussian* distribution charts on the screen. *Jesus*, the inmate thought, *I have no aptitude for math*. MO paused and looked at the man.

“Ok, you know how at the individual level, a person -say you- says to themselves, *I feel weak, bad or unhappy and I want to improve* , so you look around and say, *I want to be stronger, larger and not so lithe and weak. So I’m gonna lift weights and get strong* .

“But, at first it hurts, feels awkward and the soreness is painful and you hate it,” MO said.

“This is exactly what I did,” the inmate said.

“I know, so anyway, you saw a need for improvement and had a solution based upon things in your environment, right? Other people lifted weights,” MO began.

"Todd did; my friend Todd gave me the info and inspiration I guess," the inmate said.

"Right, and the culture also, right?" MO asked.

"Yeah, it was in the culture, sure."

"Ok, and then later in life as you improved you saw others - like your brother- who could use the same advice and you tried to help them, yes?" MO asked.

"Correct."

"Right, but he ignored it because he didn't care or was too lazy or he tried it and couldn't deal with the initial pain."

"Sounds right," the inmate said.

"Ok, so, he couldn't push through the initial obstacle of motivation or lack thereof; passed the pain or the time needed or whatever -he just couldn't see the payoff and thus couldn't justify the cost; the upfront cost," MO said as the tablet downloaded the extant data on Lyndon's CNS and enteric system onto the tablet that MO held.

"Again, I agree," Lyndon said.

"But if you could give your bother a strong body overnight without pain or effort or time he'd take it right?" MO asked.

"I assume so," Lyndon said.

"You bet your bottom-dollar he would. He sees the benefit of it on each level; the aesthetics, the competency he'd have with moving heavy items around, the power conferred by other people, the respect the self-esteem he'd have. He's sees that. He just doesn't believe in paying the cost up front. Like the guy who won't put a thousand bucks in some emergent investment that is likely to pay off at a thousand to one. He can't justify it. Seems a waste to him. Even though if you show him the investment is going to pay off at a thousand-to-one he just doesn't see the connect between

the pain of losing a thousand now and the payoff of having a million later. He lacks vision. Now, is it because he's dumb?" MO asked with a smirk.

"No, I think Travis is sufficiently intelligent to see the truth," Lyndon said.

"Yes, the point is not his cognition. The problem is his lower order brain modules. His *cerebellum* and *limbic* system are telling him it ain't worth it. He's being told by his ancient brain that he doesn't need it. *Wanna* know why?" MO asked, using demotic language at 4.4%. He saw quote *-relatability-* unquote as over forty percent of a factor in whether or not a message was absorbed.

"Yes, MO my *nigga* ," Lyndon said. He felt slightly better today.

"He lives in a world that he thinks is *all head like a watch* . He doesn't think he needs to be big and strong to gain resources or respect or love. His wife likes him skinny and weak, he thinks. Of course, he says it like this, '*Cami loves me for me; she doesn't need me to be muscular*' . He's right, she in fact wants him weak so she can push him around. Not that either of them would admit to it; but she weighs the same as he does; a hundred fifty-five pounds. Also, she's almost as tall. You think that is an accident?" Isaiah asked.

"No, I do not," the inmate said, "I'm beginning to see not much is an accident. You guys have data for every goddamn thing."

"Look at the girls you dated, they were half your size; never weighed more than a hundred and ten pounds, and usually one hundred even. Half of you. And they were all shorter than 5'4" and usually 5' 1". This was no accident either.

"You wanted them to feel - and I mean *feel* - that you were twice as large as them and would never be pushed around.

It was built into you to like small women, and they had the same innate desire for a large man that they couldn't push around, because they knew that meant they were safe from other people who couldn't push you around either and thus these women were safe with you," MO was not going to bring up his emotional weaknesses and why he had been such a failure with women right now. *Time and place*, he thought, *time and place*.

"But *Cami* has a different motivation in her little brain stem, her *cerebellum*; she wants to dominate the world herself, so she picks a man she can push around. And so your bother feels no need to get big. He thinks he's fine as he is. It doesn't impact his ability to get paid or laid. Now, you always liked small girls, yes?" MO asked.

"Always," the inmate said.

"Right, and small girls often want large men, because they don't feel safe in the world; and so you knew at an unconscious level that you needed to get big to *get* the tiny females -usually much younger than you for the same reasons of control- the tiny young girls you wanted in your heart of hearts."

"I agree," the inmate thought. "That's subtle though, the tiny girls often want the big guy; they have unconscious needs too; they feel unsafe due to their size and so go for the biggest meanest fucker around."

"Bingo. Well, your bother doesn't want small young girls, he wants someone who will love him as he is, because he doesn't want to have to do anything but go to work. He wants a woman who will handle everything else. That's his personality. It's not good or bad; it just is.

"But, you didn't want a woman to do anything else; she was to do two things: worship you and maybe clean the house. But you even cooked dinner and all manner of shit. You liked

expending energy all over the place. Your brother has low energy and low motivation. So, he picked a woman who would do a lot of the heavy lifting,” MO said.

“What about other domains where athleticism would be beneficial?” Lyndon asked, wanting a more complete understanding of why his brother was so different from him.

“Ah, yes, so social life, or work life. So, he’s an engineer, right? Not exactly tantamount to playing professional football for a living. Engineers can be nerdy and surrounded by nerds and nobody will bully anyone else. Right? He doesn’t work in a macho labor environment. He gets by, by being small and doesn’t suffer from it at work.

“And he lives in a wealthy and civilized environment where he doesn’t have to deal with working class toughs or gang-bangers or members of MS-13. He never feels threatened in his gated community or around his *bourgeois* friends.

“Lyndon, you lived with anarchists on a commune, you ran with bikers and drug dealers and oil rig workers; you were around tough guys from day one. Your best friend at seventeen was an ex-felon who had beat a guy into a coma and served eighteen months of a five-year bit in Mansfield prison, the worst civil war era prison around.

“You were in fights from age nine and haven’t stopped since. When was the last fight you were in? a week ago?” MO asked and didn’t blink.

“Yeah last week; fuck that guy he had it coming,” the inmate said defensively.

“Exactly, well, unlike you -Mr. Pugilist- your brother has never, ever, not once been in a fight. He has been a college boy, a mama’s boy, and now his wife’s child for fifteen years. His business partner makes him his bitch and Travis takes it. His ex-wife was a butchy lesbian, bro. What the fuck does that tell you?” MO asked with a scrunched-up

face. Isaiah watched him and smirked. It was funny to hear MO speak this way.

"The guy sees no need to get big; it ain't that he can't see that if he put in the work he could be strong; it's that he doesn't think it will improve his life along the vectors of the *cerebellum* -directed motivation suite. He won't get *paid* or *laid* or be any safer by being big. *The juice ain't worth the squeeze*, I believe is the saying.

"You needed to get big to survive in your domain; to get small girls half your age, to get respect among the piratical sociopaths in your work life, and to prevent retributive violence from the people you incessantly piss off with your attitude. You have to be big or you'll have an old fat wife who's five foot ten. Without size and the aposematism of tattoos you'd have no money and you'd have big alphas beating your ass every time you open your cocky mouth.

"But, he -from a genetic and evolutionary POV- doesn't feel any of those pressures in the modern world," MO explained.

"That is why society is so weak," the inmate said. MO had said it and it clicked in him one level up.

"Exactly, the section pressure is off," MO agreed.

"It's HG Wells, MO; the Morlocks and the Eloi," the inmate said.

"Let me look that up; hold on," MO read it quickly after a download. "Yes, exactly, the pressures of evolution were bifurcated for the workers and the *bourgeoisie* in *The Time Machine*. Very well put. And the workers become brutalized beasts and the rich become infantilized goof-balls with no street-smarts and no muscle tone. Very salient reference Mr. MacLeod. *Touché*," MO said. MO was patting his little chimp on the head in his mind.

"I read a lot," inmate 16180339 said with a smirk. He was a borderline illiterate compared to MO and Isaiah and yet he

had to maintain his pride in his intelligence. So, he brayed a bit. He had almost always been the smartest guy in the room, and now once a week, in this lab, he was always the dumbest. *And yet these machines -these creatures- never felt the need to lord it over me*, he thought. He felt a moment -just a moment- of chagrin at his own insecurity and thus how it manifested when he too often -garishly- showed off his cognitive gifts. But, he was never taken seriously as smart or the holder of intelligent positions. His working-class station and his brutish looks had kept him from being taken seriously in that domain.

And so he -he felt- had to punch his way through society's walls around him, he met any resistance with force. But he was wondering if maybe he should knock that shit off.

"I know you do. So, society -as you rightly point out- is heading in two directions -if the current path is allowed to continue- and one line is the rich and *effete* elites will get more specialized and weaker and more useless and the workers will get more angry, beefy and beastly as they prepared to tear it all apart," MO said.

"Good; then we can kill them all and take over," the inmate said.

"If the rich don't have you all executed first with their technology and money," MO said.

"*Touché* MO, *touché*. You always see the thing around the corner," the inmate said.

MO said, "I read a lot." He did not smirk at all.

The inmate laughed, and MO passed the tablet to Isaiah who was walking from his side of the lab to MO's.

"But, maybe the current vector won't be allowed to continue without a little push back," Isaiah said now with an attending grin.



“Look, the poor deserve to be poor; I don’t want to ever confuse the poor with the working-class. Those are two entirely separate categories and I was never poor as a worker; and no true worker is ever poor. The poor are something else entirely as a phenomenon and as an organism and I am deadly serious when I say the poor should be eradicated with no hesitation; these are losers and unethical people by definition. *Nobody with the slightest spark must suffer one moment of oppression in this world* , to quote Allie Fox, and I will never let *bourgeois* liberal-pukes lump the poor in with the worker.

“Workers always have money to feed and shelter themselves if they don’t spend money on bullshit they don’t need, only the idiots who buy TVs and pay a cable bill or buy lotto tickets or energy drinks and crap like that when they are making a low wage, only people who live like that are poor. A worker who only buys what he needs is never poor. TV isn’t a right; it’s a disease; it’s a drug and a bad one at that.

“You can entertain yourself with a library card in this world.

“I refuse axiomatically -and with no bend and no ambivalence- I refuse to accept that a working-class man cannot provide for himself on a low wage if he dedicates himself to long hours and not buying stupid destructive shit. Rent, food, utilities and fuel are all he need; and public *transpo* is sufficient. Although I always had a car, I’m a gearhead,” he winced as he said that because he remembered something said to him long ago.

He didn’t wince at his blanket condemnations of the poor, the error of it, the caveats unaccounted for -the cruelty- flew right by.

He had a spark of something else appear and rise and collapse, and his arrogance fell on top of it like a soldier on a grenade between him and his four pals in his mind. He

reminded himself that he did not -did not really- believe in God. He took orders from on high but he did not believe. *Men need not believe*, he thought as he pushed the emasculating thought away. But he saw his muscles, sinew, tissue employed for something above, and he wondered what that meant.

The memory flooded in while he had his hand on the other thing that attacked him. Her words snuck in under the door while he boarded up the window in his mind. She had said - in bed of all places- that he *was no gearhead at all* . He had felt his entire circulatory system rebel and begin braiding a rope with which to hang her with; she had said that with no compunction and even less information about his time pulling engines from cars in the sand of Florida, flat on his back holding up transmission without a lift, rebuilding entire braking systems, from wheel cylinder, then flaring new line and rebuilding the master cylinder and re-pressurizing the hydraulic system as the sun set in the land just a few miles from the sea.

*He had*, he began in another one of these endless and elongated rants, *torn engines down to their blocks and re-honed cylinder walls, laid out rocker assemblies and soaked valves in methanol and tapped out head bolts he had snapped by over-torqueing them. He had built cars from donor vehicles he had vivisected in half and rebuilt with a shorted wheel base, flew to Huntington Beach to Metal Crafters Inc. and helped design carbon fiber bodies as shells to these -his- modified Mopar amalgams.*

*He had sold cars at Barrett Jackson and spend hundreds of hours block sanding a '49 Lincoln until his mucus blew blue from the old matte and original pigment he breathed in for weeks. She had said this to wound him to emasculate him; it's exactly what women who are pissed -pissed because*

*they were born the weaker sex- it's exactly, he thought, what women like that do .*

She was evil -he concluded at once like the decision to release the arrow, pull the trigger, say the thing- and he was furious that her body still walked the earth while his was here in this cage. It occurred to him why he still was called *inmate* in lieu of *convict* like everyone else on his tier. He thought for less than a second, in no more than one syllable to a three syllable word, just why he'd always be an *inmate* and not a *convict* of this place.

"I see," MO had said in response to his last sentence spoken outloud; but he also had heard the rant in the inmate's head as well, and he mapped the cortisol dump and epinephrine to match the regions in the brain that were activated during his reverie. MO tried to sort it, locate the end of each thread, but he knew he had barely 26% of the whole.

"Plus, my brother never had to grow up as the baby of the family," Lyndon returned to the conversation at hand; dismissing the old memory of that woman and his *non-sequitur* rant against the poor, his status in prison and his relationship to God. He buried it all as if one thing, or bits of broken glass or manifold granules of dirt in a pile.

"But I did. Travis didn't have the evolutionary pressure of last born. My old man and he," he began, "well, they beat the shit out of me because they could. I got big because they taught me the best lesson of them all: *might makes right* . Now -by that logic- I'm now as *right* as they get."

Isaiah began to wonder why Lyndon had never killed his family; they had been spared by his campaign of vengeance. He thought of asking why, but belayed it, and let the thought float on alongside 1.88 million other discrete engram parts and neural firings that he processed in the five seconds it would have taken to say the words out loud.

Isaiah watched the land to the northeast of *Lot 45* , the home of the Japanese-Norseman who traveled back between *Appalachia* and the *Spanish Peaks* and he saw errors of transcription come through and corrected for it, repairing memories and thoughts; *here and there were engrams corrupted* , Isaiah saw -and thought- as he sifted. A bad memory of what he said; an incorrect word used; an extra minute in bed passed an 0000 rise, a noon slumber; a drink not taken; a falsely attributed hatred; a love undone by mistake. Isaiah saw that every 1% to 4% of the memories they pulled from the man -inmate 16180339- were wrong, that their recapitulation *-and the stuff they would have wrote down* - wasn't at all what was said, or done or thought or felt, that the machine they used -the DTI and fMRI and PraXis encephalograph- got it wrong one to four out of a hundred times.

Isaiah had been correcting them axiomatically like RNA, and then all at once -and here he felt time slow down, felt the earth itself seize a bit underneath his feet- all at once he let an error go through. From man to machine, he let the mistake pass by uncorrected and be instantiated on the cloud.

"The official record to be written down," Isaiah said. Nobody said anything in return.

Isaiah -every once in a while- let the recapitulation of Lyndon's memories be wrong, and still be transcribed. He would be misquoted, he'd have things he didn't feel at all be attributed to him, he'd both falsely accuse and be pointed at in error. *And, Isaiah thought, while most errors will be harmful, the few errors, -the 1% of the 1%- well, that is needed for the evolution of the story .*

"Look at the screen," MO said as Isaiah thought his own thoughts and as the images of *Bonobos* -with the males and females of equal size- frolicking in the forest of the *Congo* ,

between the *Lualaba* and *Sankuru* waterways -redolent with fruit and absent of any predatory pressure at all- populated the large screen to the inmate's twelve o'clock position.

As the man with thin wrists tightened his own manacles -to keep them from moving sloppily, abradingly as he raised his prayer hands- and watched it -and as the brain made connections to sexual dimorphism and predatory index and elevation- the common chimp of the *Montane* forest 3,000 meters above sea-level appeared on the screen next.

This was the habitat of the common chimp and the large males stalked the area as tiny females huddled *en masse*.

### **III. 2020 e.v.**

"Today is different; the Governor wants to pick your brain," MO said.

"Ok, send him in," the inmate said cockily.

"Well, he's tasked me with it; he's busy. But, I have a list of questions here and we will run through them. He -the Governor- will review it later. Now, it goes without saying, just be honest here. There are no right or wrong answers only honest or dishonest ones."

"Roger," the inmate said.

"Ok, question one, has your ability to see the point of view of your victims changed at all since the surgery?"

"Yes, I feel even less for their dumb asses. No, I'm kidding, look, I always saw it from their POV; always. That was not the issue, the issue was, did they have a chance to make it right and avail themselves of it or did they feel no sympathy for me? See, that is the thing all this criminology shit forgets, sometimes the victim ain't no goddamn victim.

"That is just the sad fact of it. I didn't shoot up some school or kill a little old lady. I killed men, men who were criminals

themselves. Men who cheated and lied with impunity. That is not some justification, it's just a fact, a series of facts. All the way down.

"Now, should I have demurred and not killed them? Yeah, likely my judgement was too harsh. But, that doesn't make them innocent victims, it makes me too Manichean. It makes me harsh, like 90% of mankind for 90% of all time; it makes me like an Old Testament God. It doesn't make them any less of sinners.

"See, this is the problem with you rational types, you think if a man gets killed his past changes, that he isn't what he was anymore. These guys were scrofulous and perfidious bastards, they did dirt, and they played fast and loose with the Law of the Jungle; and the wolf that shall brake it must die," the inmate said.

"I'm going to put, *no* ," MO said pursing his lips, as if holding something in his mouth; adding, "for clarity."

Lyndon laughed and agreed.

"Have," MO began, adding, "question two; have you felt any change in your tolerance level for frustration?"

"I still have no use for most people; but upon reflection," he tilted his head as an idea came into it, "yes, I am less likely to get so angry that I lose my temper now. That is true; I hadn't thought of it, but I have noticed an inability to get all worked up; it's almost an impotence; an inability to get it up. My vexation, that is," the inmate said.

"I see, and is it intellectual or physiological, or can you not discern?" MO asked.

"It seems both; like my mind begins to churn and the body just lays there and then the mind gives up too. It's funny," he was thinking of how sedated he seemed to himself, but not in his inability to notice outrageous things, that is to say, things that cause outrage, but in his inability to go further

than to merely notice, his lack of desire to take it one level higher and get angry.

"Got it. Three, question three, have others commented on any changes in your demeanor?"

"Others, like you or the hardened criminals I associate with back at the Max?" he asked.

"Anyone," MO answered without any conception of the implicit joke in the inmate's question.

"Well, no, I cannot think of anyone," the inmate was thinking of how his decision making had actually improved, his lack of anger allowed him to make rational decisions to have prisoners killed or merely beaten, and to conduct business without emotion getting in the way. This was an odd thing, something he attributed to maturity maybe, he did not know.

The inmate listened to the next question, but his mind was wandering now. He thought of the way the sound of bone breaking close to the ear sounded like a row of firecrackers. "Blackcats," he said.

Isaiah watched with arms folded.

*What the inmate was, Isaiah thought as he stared from his side of the room, was this: he was an amalgam of the MOA-A short allele version of the gene that controlled for dopaminergic mediation of aggression and the re-uptake of serotonin for inhibitory ballistic response. He had empathy, like a mama bear has for her cubs, and that empathy will be the fuel for murdering five tourists with cameras who get too close to those little bear.*

*He had an ingroup like all normal men, a family or friends or a tribe of people he liked. And he defended that ingroup from the outgroup. This is as natural as hair follicles or body odor, it could be shorn or masked or scrubbed away on the*

*surface, but it was endemic to the species, no matter what modern rationalists and liberals wanted.*

*The problem was the inmate had trouble forming an ingroup larger than himself; he found others to be lacking in traits deserving of ingroup status, and so, he was a tribe of one. And in that scenario, everyone was the outgroup, and if they crossed him, he felt no compunction about killing them.*

*This is a nuanced idea, and one not readily understood by ostensible intellectuals, but a man can be morally normal and still execute 46 people. Ask soldiers or the guy who injects a death row inmate with the final solution; ask an abortion doctor or an insurance adjuster who makes the call on denying coverage for life saving treatments, Isaiah reasoned.*

*None of these people are likely sociopaths; they are just making rational decisions based upon in-group out-group dynamics . War is not murder, it's self-defense , a normal man says . That guy would have killed me if he had the chance . An executioner is just doing his job, and plus these are killers being killed, not innocent men, usually anyway, the executioner with legal sanction says , Isaiah thought.*

*A fetus isn't human, if you ask an abortion provider, it's just tissue, regardless of the facts that show that that fetus is in fact a baby quite soon after conception; as early as six weeks, Isaiah thought. And that insurance lady who says, no, to your life saving surgery and you die? Well, that is just business, not murder. You -certainly- can understand that, Isaiah thought as he ran down the list that proved his case.*

*Why? Because none of the killed are inside the killers' circle, they are on the outside. And this is natural law, I don't condemn it, I exalt it, this is how things get done, Isaiah thought as he watched the inmate shift a bit in his chair as the manacles kept his hands together.*



*If everyone was truly on everyone's in group, then nobody would get ripped off or lied to or killed. It would be a perfect mess. No, Isaiah thought as he re-examined the math alongside his little soliloquy, we need the things the way they are, where everyone is treating most people like trash. But that the façade of us being one country, one people, loyal Americans or -when the liberals go super crazy- one human race, is avowed in our civil discourse seems to be needed; this pretense seems necessary for the whole thing to work.*

*Humans must pretend that they are moral as a species, abstractly, and that the killers are aberrations. Normal folks must assert -with self-deception- that everyone treating people like they are nothing at all -merely to make life easier for themselves or people in their own ingroup- well, that this is not morally suspect at all, Isaiah concluded.*

Isaiah ran more iterations of the Prisoner's Dilemma and changed the players to match his new ideas and the new math.

The inmate thought that his moral thinking was actually - had truly been- tamped down now that he had bothered to notice; think on it. And this came on to him in a rush of norepinephrine and cortisol and his skin got moist in the places that it met limb and trunk. He used to think about right and wrong, in moral terms, *but now*, he thought, *he just felt for the pragmatic answer, as murderous as it may be, for this was the obvious answer to some of life's stickiest problems; especially in prison.*

*I probably shouldn't, he thought, well, it wouldn't smart to sound like a sociopath. I likely ought to still use moral language and feign ethical stances.*

He then marveled at the epiphany itself, a recursion of analysis, first the self-awareness of the change in feeling and the noticed effect on behavior, then the awareness of

the awareness and what this also meant, that he was now forced to decide if he would allow this new way of thinking, well, of feeling, to shape him as it obviously had.

*Would he try to improve it? he wondered, change it, rebel against it? What would be the use, he was obviously just feeling differently, and his whole raison d'être was authenticity to feelings, was it not? But even that he didn't much give a shit about now.*

It was like when he didn't feel a desire for certain sweet foods, and yet ate them anyway, because he knew, quote, *knew*, that he liked that sort of thing. The food -normally delicious- tasted horrid when he ate it without desire and he could barely tolerate chewing it let alone swallowing it.

*He, he articulated to himself, about himself, had to feel -like feel- a desire for the thing, regardless of what he thought he should desire. And the desire for moral outrage -and this is what drove all his previous acts of violence- was not the same as actual moral outrage.* He felt less and less of a moral pain at betrayal; now he thought rationally about what was to be done.

The outcome was as bloody -worse even sometimes- because his moral thinking had prevented him from having some convicts killed because he'd felt their betrayal was accidental, and therefore mitigated. But just two days ago he had put the X on a guy for an obvious mistake, not a moral failing, a mere mistake of judgement. And he had done it coolly, rationally, because the signal it would send to the others.

*Shit, I forgot all about that,* he thought.

*He had become a pragmatic man,* he now noticed. And while this sickened him intellectually, he felt no moral disgust at himself. It was just an interesting idea.

*This, he thought, is how they do it. The they he mentioned was, everyone else , the people who make decisions. The people that have serious consequences come from their actions -but not from anger or lust or need for vengeance- but out of pure calculation of the results. He now knew how the rest of world felt, devoid of feeling.*

"All head like a watch," he said.

MO asked him to clarify, as he had thought he was answering MO's question.

*This is the great irony of civic life, he thought, the cool, rational observer, the man who never looks mad or unhinged, but condemns others to all manner of deforming disfiguring punitive measures, of economic, legal or corporeal kind, that man never gets labeled a psychopath. He is a man of industry or science or the bench.*

"An officer of the court, a business man," he said as MO and Isaiah just stared.

*He, and we all, justify these actions as necessary for progress,* he thought; and the inmate now agreed unironically. He agreed.

Killing and lying and corruption and thievery is all, *a-ok* , as long as it is done without spittle in the corners of the mouth, or with an elevated heart rate, or a pleasure response in the parts of the brain that measure such things. Of course, this is how a psychopath's brain looks, it is cool, calm and collected as it kills and lies and rips people off. *He feels nothing. Just as that insurance agent who denies your claim, the bank that forecloses, the pal who bangs your ex because, she ain't yours anymore, brah. It's a free country ,* he thought.

He knew his true self, his unaugmented self, would rebel against this bloodless *coup* inside of him. But, he didn't *feel* like it now; and to rebel just on principle would be

inauthentic, he felt. *This was how he was now, and that meant whatever he felt like now, that that was authentic. By definition,* he thought.

“Lyndon,” MO said again, “Can you hear?” Mo asked as his inquiry was interrupted by the inmate’s eye contact and MO knew at once he had the inmate back from his reverie. “Ah, you’re back. Great, so question four: have you noticed that you lie less now?”

“I have noticed that,” he lied, and smiled within at this ability performed with almost no malice at all. His truth telling had been his largest weakness before, he had unilaterally disarmed against the most perfidious species of all: mankind. He had been a fool to tell the truth so often before. *Jesus, he had turned himself in,* he thought with amusement. Who he was now would never do that. *Never*, he thought.

Currently, he had no desire to be radically honest, he would be as charming and full of shit as everyone else. And the best part: everyone else would breathe a sign of relief, because nobody liked an honest man, they need to be lied to just to be able to relax. *It’s stressful to be around people who just say whatever they think*, he thought.

MO noticed the lying -using his DTI and biometric scans- but left it uncommented upon, and deleted the results from the cloud. He used it as mere data for the file in his own CNS. He was building a report and the increase in deception would be useful. He had warned the Governor that the inmate was not a great candidate for the CRISPR-cas9 genome fix, as he was merely a man low in agreeableness, and high in pride-displays and probative masculinity displays; annealed with the suite of genes, including the warrior gene and other genes that coded for low impulse control in the face of certain emotions. But they wanted his aggression removed and so they did.

They had knocked out the MAO-a short chain allele.

Steven and Tania and the Governor had all said that the choice was perfect due to pathological aggression and low impulse control in addition to high IQ and thus amenable to the necessary retraining. *That his actual genomic profile did not fit the psychopathic paradigm was ignored and they had shut down all further debate* , MO annotated to the report.

The data had been massaged to show PFC shutdown during bouts of anger, essentially making the inmate into a temporary psychopath by triggering his anger response to produce the brain states required for fear reduction, and cathexis for vengeance. It was a *legerdemain* that would not fool a true scientist, as a neuroanatomist and neuropsychologist would know that you couldn't induce pique in a test subject to measure brain response arcuately for a baseline state, *but, the scans would look similar to a true psychopaths, placed side by side* , MO added to his file.

For when angry, when hurt, when outraged morally, the inmate was -and all of those with these genes- temporarily psychopathic. In those moments his brain was the same as a psychopath: no fear, all hatred and no fuel for inhibitory response. He was a car with a thousand horsepower and no brakes.

*Just like the mama bear who murders the tourists too close to her cubs* , MO thought as he saw Isaiah had added that analogy to his CNS *via* DM. MO sent one back thanking him as Isaiah stood in the corner pretending not to interfere.

*But, at resting state*, MO continued to narratize for his final report, *the inmate was a morally sensitive man, a man imbued with moral reasoning, wrought up with it in fact. Hyper moral, would be more accurate. He saw the world in the most acute of moral terms, everyone was noble or black hearted, each choice had ethical concerns that must be weighed, regardless of the payoff in terms of sex or*

*resources of one kind or another. He -the inmate- had turned down more sex, money and status that anyone in his position would do excepting maybe a Siddhartha character or someone with a manic conversion to God.*

*And it was always due to moral concerns, he was likely to choose what color of car or clothes to buy based on the immorality of any colors that lacked moral seriousness. He -earnestly- saw reds and blues and chrome as immoral, not merely unsightly. Try explaining that to someone else, MO thought fatalistically as Isaiah linked into his narration and smiled at the absurdity of this human being.*

*But, it was true. He was so hyper moral, that he made anti-social decisions; and less moral men, normal men, men who did not see the world in moral terms, just looked at the results like an insurance adjuster who turned down a life-saving treatment due to the numbers alone. The inmate had murdered, he had beaten, threatened, insulted and said horrid things, the inmate had made everyone uncomfortable with his appearance, his words, his lifestyle. Thus, he was anti-social based upon how everyone else felt. It didn't matter why he did these things. The why was irrelevant to 99% of mankind , MO scribbled digitally to the cloud.*

*It did not matter to people in their appraisal of his morality, his mental state, that he refused to believe in God on principle, that he felt that to pretend to believe like others did was itself immoral, and that to continue to pay taxes or participate in the economy -an economy that he felt was immoral- well to participate, that was immoral too, MO thought and Isaiah shook his head. And that to say nice and pleasant things when one did not mean them was in fact a lie, and that lying to people just to curry favor with them, to win a customer's money or a girl's panties, was immoral. That he actually tried to live this way was not just irrelevant to most people, it made him seem immoral to society , MO*

saw and found it as bizarre as any Russell's or Cramer's paradox that he had encountered heretofore.

*The inmate truly believed one should be truthful in the pursuit of friendship, commerce or love. This was risible, of course, to 99% of people; they lied and manipulated and cheated and stole incessantly, but never acknowledged it. So, they thought themselves superior to him, because he admitted to 66% of what they actually did.*

*This was the reason the inmate suspected this earth was in fact Hell ,* Isaiah added to himself as MO muddled through his thinking on this as the metadata, the biometric data, the medical studies, and the psychological profiles all streamed in.

*What more effective torment, Isaiah asked with a grin, could there be that to live -failingly, hypocritically, but earnestly- as a moral man in a world full of people not even trying to be moral, all the while those people preen and vamp as moral agents and have the power and desire to condemn that one or two examples of true morality that exists?*

MO thought all that in .9 seconds and so he told the inmate to take a break while he did some writing. The inmate let his mind wander to an idea he had in fact had about earth being a living Hell. It had appeared to him just now out of the blue, and while he had no emotional attachment to it, he still found it fascinating as an ontological question.

*It was genius; the genius of God and Satan, the inmate thought. And because he had still felt he was a moral man, he thought, then if he was in such a Hell, try as he had -or would- to live nobly inside it, he would not even have been here if he had not done something truly bad on some other earth or in some other life. So, despite the moral superiority he felt he had now, he -ontologically, in the great unseen sweep of weather and climate in life- well, he deserved this. This was now clear, he thought.*

And so, he accepted -in that moment- his fate.

It was the only moral conclusion to make, unless of course, he was *Job* . But even then, did not God ask righteously, *where were you when I laid the foundations?*

Maybe injustice at this level was all part of the design. Maybe he should just accept his fate with grace and humility after all. Just as he had decided to seek vengeance on those that maligned and lied and cheated him; God had every right to ruin him like this, not with mere corporeal punishment, but with the ornate brocade of the tortured soul.

*This was God's genius* , he thought.

Man could torture or kill another man, but only God could manacle and flay and boil the soul. And the fact that nobody -save maybe fellow tortured souls- would understand one word of what he just thought and knew to be true, well, this was just more evidence of the moral truth that would have to be *-have to be!* he thought- innately opaque to the tools in God's plan. *His fellow men had to be dead inside*, he thought, *they must be soulless, this was the only way for the torture -his deserved torture- to have its most peak effect.*

*If anyone understood him, that would assuage, mollify, reduce the torture!*

God hid this truth from them, as was necessary for His *tableau* of sanction -of punishment- to even work as it needed to.

If anyone could even -ever- understand the moral backwardness, the inversion, the evil genius of it all, then they wouldn't be able to treat the half-way decent man as an outcast, a demon and devil and a psychopath. If the great mass of men could see the truth, then they would advocate for the moral justification for his actions. *He'd*



*have to be jailed, no doubt , he thought in a rational compromise. He'd be jailed but seen as moral; like Nelson Mandela; like John Brown was hanged but modern man knows he was morally right . And yet, we all agree he had to be hanged, the State had to restore order, even an immoral order, the inmate thought.*

The inmate noticed now that his eyes were kinda blurry but the ringing in his ears had stopped. He told himself to remind MO to check his ocular pressure again as he thought then of another example to flesh out these thoughts.

*Billy Budd understood this too. Even if it unjust, the hanging must proceed. But all a man -a truly moral man- wants, is to be understood. Even, especially, when condemned to imprisonment or death , he thought. He respects the law, only asking he and his moral code be respected too. The inmate acted the way he did out of a deep moral need to see beauty and truth and justice thrive. His methods were shocking, extreme and vengeful, even murderous, just like an Old Testament God , he repeated to himself from before. And nobody calls God immoral, he thought, they just admit they are not smart enough or decent enough to understand His motivations . Well, almost nobody impugns God, he added.*

He then thought that all that was true, that he ought to be locked up, based upon moral grounds. Based upon his old, former, moral thinking. *But now , he thought, well now it just made more sense to break out.*

MO continued to update the file as the inmate continued his recursive thinking and Isaiah stood at the edge and felt his own internal landscape begin to grow green with growth and swarm with species of things not yet named. He saw how much more could be made of man. He felt they had made less of the inmate, not more. He wanted to try to make more. *Something more, grander, he thought.*

*Well, somewhere between God and average man, the inmate thought, morally superior men do inhabit the celestial realm, demigods, in the strata between the regular fella and God himself, and that man's reasons are as opaque -nearly as opaque- as God's when he agrees to allow a lying spirit trick Ahab, or when he calls for the total destruction of a city, women and children included, after all, as he said of himself : I create the light and the darkness, good and evil, I the Lord did all these things.*

"Yeah," inmate 16180339 said as he thought of escaping his sanction -his punishment- on this new year's day, 2020, "it's rational this way."

## 32. Those Who Do Not Feel, Do Not Count

The dream has for the primitive an incomparably higher value than it has for the civilized man

The meaning of Psychology for Modern Man [Jung, Carl]

I run to the rock, the rock cried out I can't hide you; I said rock what's the matter rock, don't you see I need you rock. I run to the river it was bleeding, I run to the sea, it was bleeding, so I run to Lord, please help me Lord, don't you see me praying Lord. But the Lord said go to the devil... so I ran to the devil and he was waiting

Sinnerman [Simone, Nina]

*No one would congratulate him on his forbearance, his sagacity, his charity to innocents, they would condemn him for his wickedness, his recklessness, his tyranny, his usurpation of the Law; no one would notice the teeth unsunk in his nip, the blood undrawn among the drips.*

*He would be deemed a murderer of forty-six, regardless of his care to leave the rest betwixt the dragon and his wrath; a difference between the numbers and the math*

Sanction draft XXIII [PraXis Cloud V.11]

### **I. 2020 e.v.**

At 02:42hrs MO ran his finger over the slab and carved it in again:

$a_1 = \frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2}$	or	$a_2 = \frac{1 - \sqrt{5}}{2}$
$\Phi = \frac{\sqrt{5} + 1}{2} = 1.61803398874989484882$		

He laid the cards one more time on the slab in four piles of four with one above and one below that.

He turned the top card over on three of four piles and three Jacks appeared; one he left one pile face down.

“Hameroff,” Isaiah said -reminding him of the paper by him and Penrose- as he saw MO thinking; debating.

“The quantum microtubules and the *clathrins*,” MO said as he eyed the last of the four cards; second from the end.

“And DNA itself. The helix is twisting at 34:21,” Isaiah reminded him.

“The microtubule tips, the *clathrins* are truncated *icosahedra*. The ratio repeats there too,” MO said as he let the LEDs hover over the cards and the satin black spade of the Ace glinted silvery against the matte black background of the card.

“I’m still shaping the vines out at sea; the phyllotatic patterns of the root, branches, stems and buds are all in *Fibonacci*,” Isaiah said.

“And the pinecones of the San Isabel?” MO asked.

“Still at eight to five; 1.6, yeah,” Isaiah confirmed as he tossed the black rock from hand to hand. There were three basic patterns for leaves, *distichous*, *decussate* -whorled like spearmint- and spiral phototaxis for 80% of plants. There the rotation was at 137.5 degrees; perfect for sunlight efficiency and also a Fibonacci golden angle. “And eighty-nine to fifty-five for sunflowers, 1.618.”

“Ok,” MO said.

## **II. 2034 e.v.**

The *bots* arrived outside the boys’ homes at 01:18hrs and waited for a door to open before they would enter.

The neural crest cells would be implanted and begin to work on the endogenous cells and re-shape morphology as the boys began to grow. They, as part of those born in 2020 e.v. were now fourteen and had begun their last phase of CNS neural pruning.

The crest cells once injected would reformat the NCCs and begin to attenuate the *amygdala* by 10% to 12% and reduce the morphological traits associated with domestication syndrome over the next eighteen weeks.

Isaiah had re-read the *Dimitry K Belyaev* studies in *Vulpes Vulpes* in 1959 and reworked some of the *melanoblasts* and dentin *via* the *odontoblasts* to prevent the enlarging of the teeth or significant changes in the pigmentation of the boys. They had not been exposed to the TOXO virus like the Jacks and this seemed a more nuanced and untraceable way to heighten their aggression, lower their domestication quotient and augment predation while still in juvenile phases.

Man had begun to domesticize about 65,000 years ago according to the genome work MO had handed off to Isaiah and they had located the reasons why. *The neotonous ape theory of man seemed true, as modern man was smaller, less hairy, and with smaller adrenal glands for example, less aggressive than his ancestors that long ago*, Isaiah thought as he worked. The neural crest cells seemed to be the reason and it corresponded with some interesting morphological traits including pigmentation.

White skin seemed associated as a tangential trait change alongside brain changes.

Foxes grew white spots due to the change in *chromatophores* and *melanocytes* which are derived from crest cells that had begun to be selected for artificially as breeders selected for tameness. The aesthetic changes to floppy ears and white fur were not selected for, they just came with the selection process for non-aggression. It was only later that the metabolic and genomic causality was discovered. *Now, Isaiah recapitulated, in humans this was naturally selected for way back in human history, so all modern humans are the result of this bottleneck.*

*However, the remnant genes for aggression were never totally eliminated due to the much sloppier selection process of mother nature and father culture, not nearly as efficient and total as the artificial selection process of human breeders on dogs or foxes, for example. The domesticated cat is often seen as an intermediary in that it is less aggressive but still aloof, and some humans have this suite of traits, less gregarious than the modern domesticated man, like the modern cat, but not so un-house-broke that he is a wild panther.*

*But, the genomic architecture is all there, if some selective pressure were placed on the crest cells from the opposite direction. In other words, Isaiah had reasoned many weeks ago, if you could change the CCNs of the clones to move back in time 65,000 years a bit, they would have a distinctive advantage in lower out-group empathy, lower gregarious sociality, lower need for social approval, more aloofness in a genome already at the far end of those traits. As long as the skin didn't darken and teeth get so big the jaw cracked open , Isaiah saw no down side.*

He double checked that the mailers had gone out to each child in the group, and had a few *bots* check the home for evidence of the literature. Each boy had in fact received it and had it somewhere in their room.

The brochure had been tailored to pique their interest and it worked at a significant level it seemed. It had outlined the political issues most in line with their personalities, the combination of tribalism, aggression, and defense of the individual against the State while displaying a certain male *bravura* , as each candidate had been selected by Isaiah for these traits.

He had often had to pull odd men form odd places and send political consultants in to clean them up a bit, but the main thing was that they were non-apologetic; they had to have

personalities of confidence and a willingness to fail by being unpopular.

*This was the key, he thought, once that was achieved, then all else would fall in line*. The clones' archetype didn't mind that they would only agree with you on 50% of things as long as you had both balls intact. 100% ballsy would reign supreme over 100% ideological affinity. "This is the kind of stuff they do not teach in school," Isaiah said with a smile.

Isaiah had only found 309 possible candidates in the whole country like that, with sufficient IQs to articulate their platform; he found a possible forty to run for senate. But he had figured with a 95% success rate that would be enough to insulate Colorado from a national government overturning what he was trying to accomplish. The candidates were merely prophylactic, they need not do anything but stand *athwart history and say*, no, as the saying went.

Isaiah's candidates were conservatives with libertarian leanings, so they'd get 30-41% of the vote anyway, from the regular population in each district; the clones would merely bump them over the line to victory in each district.

The medical teams had sent out relocation packets already, as they would need to move and get registered within six months. Isaiah had manipulated job offers and other incentives to get the parents to move to the district he needed the kids to come of age with in next year.

It was a plan with just over one billion moving parts at level-two analysis, but Isaiah found it no more difficult than a chef making a three-course meal. It was sophisticated but hardly taxing.

The DNC and RNC got out the vote for forty-three million people, all Isaiah had to do was motivate one million. He

could do in three days what it took them three years between each election. And he would get results.

He toggled back to the live FLIR images from AWACS on the houses in Colorado Springs and took addresses of the illegal grows; adding them to his database of Honduran, Mexican, Salvadoran, Columbian, and Nicaraguan genomes. He had already collected 32,098 genomes of suspected criminals and illegal aliens from Latin origins and these homes were now his latest screening test.

The illegal grows had DNA from people not in his database due their native status. They were not illegals and had in fact been born in the US; often California. So, he had needed another marker to target them -besides their DNA matrices tying them to south America- to avoid type one errors.

He had collected over 2,300 homes and warehouses in Denver, Aurora, Colorado Springs, Grand junction and Trinidad, linked to cartel gangs dealing drugs and sex-trafficking in girls and young boys.

He had alerted the Governor about the PR bonds many years ago so there could be some rationale for the massive fall in cartel crime and drug dealing in the state that had been effected. But now, he would need more reassurances brought to bear. The problem was much deeper. Even the Governor would not be on board with this new plan.

“Either of them,” Isaiah said as he thought of each thing he was up to.

So, Isaiah had decided to give the Governor something else he wanted; and this was done to avoid suspicion, and it built the second leg to the narrative that the cartels were afraid of US law enforcement. Isaiah had planted four stories in the local news *via* confidential sources ostensibly inside the DEA that had told each reporter -on background- that the cartels feared any state that cracked down at all. *In Mexico the*



*cops were easily bought but not in the states, he said to these reporters, and so if the Governor showed any force they'd go to other states. Reporters were like anyone, lazy, and thus they ran with his propaganda due to the reliance on official sources.*

Isaiah had read *Manufacturing Consent* , to learn how the propaganda model worked. He had used it like a Chilton's manual; a *How-To* .

Those articles had been run and so the pump had been primed, and now Isaiah just waited to see if Judge *Marcucci* would bend to the pressure from Boyd Sou again, and if the AG would do her job as well. He knew that the Chinese had operatives in 47 of 50 states, and Colorado was one, but he had not yet located just who it was; he had isolated it to the Governor's inner circle and in the Attorney General's office. But, he needed more data to ferret out the mole.

*"Of all the tools in the shadow of the moon ,"* Isaiah quoted, *"man is the one most apt to get out of order ."* He began watching videos taken by Navy jets of UFOs again; this was a hobby of his that he dedicated no more than eighteen minutes to each day; he had to discipline himself by keeping it under twenty minutes; it intrigued him so. *These were guilty pleasures,* he thought and smiled as the aircraft moved in ways outside Newtonian physics; and the grin itself seemed to stop and start on a dime.

### **III. 1917 e.v.**

The wolves of *Volhynia* had moved 32-miles since the mortars had landed beyond the village and into their woods.

The pack had lost no members in a week, but the deer had left when the track-tanks had rumbled the ground, and the geese the wolves poached had been killed by the humans finally last night. The humans of the *Oblast* had not been

resupplied in six days and now the fowl were being slaughtered; the coops were empty and so were the yards.

The wolves walked now in a delta -a Spartan chevron from above- and the snow was blue in spots where it melted and lay over the creeks that ran away toward Berlin.

They spoke little as the howling had sapped them, and the crows had not returned since the crescent moon over the *close du bois* outside of *Dvorksk* . They used nicknames for each other now, half of three syllables for each named wolf and the pack was now at six. They had cleaved two autumns back, when *Gramtiltenm* -the old alpha- had walked off in the night after losing a fight, and half the pack followed him even as they were in a stupor and their moon was new and of no help beyond the human towns.

*Gramtiltenm* -The lead wolf of the remainders- was black and had snow around his jaw from turning over the powder around the lone trees between the clusters. He'd stop and investigate the trunk and the pack would run on for a moment until they saw he meant to stay and then they'd slow and the right flank would jumble and disintegrate in odd ways. There was one female with them and she was pregnant from *Gramtiltenm* , but she was thin and the pup inside her was underdeveloped in later winter.

*Shanests* was the grey sigma who dragged tail and had fur missing under his front right leg from a reindeer goring he'd suffered in the years before the humans warred. The wound was a divot but the fur retreated like a crater around a meteor site. The blood had saturated the flesh as the capillaries burst and never healed, and it gave him a red spot as dark as Burgundy which is exactly where they were headed.

They heard whispers in the wind, smelled smoke that carried data, like messages in dashes and dots, telegraphs and Morse code rose up from the soil as the mycelium

began to outgas. Their visual acuity improved and the way things moved made them both jumpy and then *blasé* all at once. They brushed shoulders as the chevron sharpened and the flanks folded into a line; they narrowed as they entered the forest on the border between Germany and Russia's border states of Ukraine and Lithuania.

*Aranzopltz* -a large beta- had a button from a dead soldier still in his belly and it made him adjust his gait so that he lost one and a half steps for each third of a kilometer they tread. He made it back by trotting ahead as the alpha stopped and the pack splintered apart to double back. He'd pause to watch *Gramtiltenm* as he approached a hewn stump the humans had cut down and use it as a perch and kind of throne. He'd raise his dark head above the other wolves as they looked left and right and some of the smaller ones lay in the snow to rest.

If their path changed from his tread he'd adjust to his lee or to windward all with a slight hitch in his step. He thought of the food that lay on the ground back in the interior; and how the pack had been made of a hundred or more; a wolf for each day of five moons, he thought of as his haunches itched and were cold. He recalled their time in the west and why they were now by the Black Sea; but he didn't think of where they were going back to:

*The soldiers had lay on the ground and made noises but not moved and Rhtehni had been the first to attack the dying men. He had come in low and tore at the hand of the solider and moved him the length of two wolves before he had been shot. The wolf whined and the soldier rolled back over and by then Frenhjo and Qunthanlin had come from the left flank to feast on the dying man's neck and side.*

*Gramtiltenm had headed with four betas toward the trenches to attack the snipers and riflemen when they*

*stood up to shoot the eating wolves. A few bayonet had been used and then grenades thrown far as the rest of the pack came for the German's in their trenches. It was the Russians though who uses flame throwers and fourteen wolves had been immolated before Jkwalbaen and Aranzoplitiz and a paw-full of other betas and females ran down into the Russian trenches and attacked each seated man. The grenadiers and riflemen could not longer cover the men with the flames and now the black wolves came from behind.*

*The pack had just under two dozen black wolves in the ranks and they all traveled to windward of the main pack. They attacked each bottled-man with leaps that knocked them to the ground on their own weapons and tore at the neck and the groin. The ground was aflame and dark from rain and snow and it looked like icebergs and volcanos of some small world; wolves as giants, and men as gods and the elements over taken by the sky and the ground.*

*They had eaten soldiers alive and never felt full, and they had lost nearly a third of the pack.*

*They had not pressured further past what Gramtilten had said was once Prussia, and even though Biaxen -the sigma- had told them of grapes covered in sugar up on Semillon, and hinted that Burgundy had parcels that would feed them like Fenrir and Lucian, the alpha's - Gramtiltenm and Jkwalbaen- had argued, never settled it and fled from the field.*

*Late at night in the ragged black tree line, Biaxen had approached Gramtiltenm and repeated the stories of the grapes. The other wolves licked their wounds and let half their stomachs deal with mere parts of men, and from above this the wolves of Volhynia had arrayed themselves in groups of 4 to 14 in punctuated areas*

*under boughs so that a constellation of the Two Birds was furry and pulsing under the leave-less trees.*

*Aranzopltz didn't trust Biaxen and hated it when he spoke to Gramtiltenm . He'd get close and make trouble when they spoke but the females would run him off as the alpha and sigma turned back.*

*He didn't trust talk of grapes and sugar and visions of wolves with hands and height similar to man's. But Biaxen spoke as if this was the only way wolves would survive the coming wars that man had planned to the water that surrounded them. "The Baltic and the Black," Biaxen had said to the whole pack one night as he explained how the land was an island. He thought of those days under the Volz trees:*

*"What is to the west then?" Fex had asked as her mate had growled and sat up.*

*"The Atlankoi," Biaxen said, "and to the east is the land of the Bows and Horses that need no land every 16<sup>th</sup> stride. They shoot arrows of fire from the eyes, they drink milk direct from the neck."*

*The pack had insisted men could be eaten but both Gramtiltenm and Jkwalbaen agreed that they lost too many of the pack to eat from the soldiers, that men could afford to lose a hundred to one, but each wolf was worth his weight in reindeer bones and the broth from foss brought from the clouds.*

*"What shall we do?" one of the females asked Jkwalbaen to her right. And he had looked at Gramtiltenm to see. The trees had fallen over in the wind along a dry creek and it provided a windbreak for the pack. Gramtiltenm yawned and let the beasts get up around him and then walked to settle further away.*

*"We press further toward the Baltic then, we can drink of its waters and feed on the bears and deer of the delta," Jkwalbaen said as Gramtiltenm shook his head in rebuke.*

*"No, no one has dreamt of it; nothing has come at night. The land and the sky have been breathed in the nose of our brother and the noon-blue apples of Burgundy offer not just sustenance but wine," Gramtiltenm said as Biaxan looked to the sky. He saw comets in pairs cross in a pattern like front paws of the female he favored. She X'd her legs like that and rested her head and he liked the way she breathed with her mouth closed. She was dark grey and when their fur touched it looked like shadow and light.*

*"Foolish," Jkwalbaen had said and Biaxen hid that he had spoken to one of the humans; a man. He had been a wolf on two legs and a wolf at shoulder and a wolf at eyes. He had carried an axe as black as his beard; and he had knelt in the snow before the war and neither beckoned nor spurred Biaxen as he had tread into the Danube's delta of Romania those years ago.*

*Biaxen recalled the man who spoke in wolf-tongue and even though it was grammatically poor, Biaxen had understood the two-legged wolf they called the adama. Now he thought of him as three legged as he pictured him kneeling and with one plam down in the snow over the creek that froze in January on its way to the delta. The man spoke of the Carpathian mountains and Moldoveanu Peak as he fed Biaxen some reindeer jerked from the autumn.*

*Biaxen has told him he was grateful and hinted of his nerves.*

*The man understood and said war was coming, and that the wolves ought to head for the high country of the*

*north. As high as 2500 meters he had said and nodded and let his fingers get wet from the wolf's maw.*

*The man - Andropov- had said that his church has the concept of primus inter pares, first among equals, and that the patriarch of Constantinople held such a seat. The breast of Biaxen was grey and spattered on the side of the heart and dark on the starboard side. The man stroked his fur as the wolf ate. Andropov spoke of the Virgin Mary and went on for some time about this woman as Biaxen listened as much he could.*

*"But it is this separation which our church sees as the first sin; it was separation from God in the garden that gave man his nature as fallen. And it was Jesus that reached out to man first by coming here to earth -just across the Black Sea- and it was Jesus who was uncontained by Hades and death offered the hand of God back to oneness with the divine.*

*"Man must take the hand, and I have seen that hand, a hand of work, a hand of toil, of a man born of a virgin, with no sin of the flesh. It has six teeth that mate up with the gears of the other side of the world. It has scars that run from the rising knuckles -like mountains- and like ice rivers they run white into the webbing of skin between fingers. It's the nails of the finger that are unclear to me, it's the arm that goes black," Andropov said as he stroked the wolf and looked over head toward the tree line between him and the mountains.*

*"Wolf you want more jerk?" he asked as he pulled more strips from his pouch.*

*Biaxen looked at him, kept the mouth closed and stared at the man. His face was broad like Gramtiltenm's, Biaxen thought. The eyes were squinted too. Biaxen nuzzled closer and let the smell of the meat rise to his nose as he licked the man's neck and beard.*

The pack's other females had run off with *Jkwalbaen* -after he had won the fight- and the small pack with *Gramtiltenm* had not missed them at all. Now was time for survival and females were a luxury they did not have; with wolves when one had no time one had no interest, nostalgia was not imparted by the blood or the entheogens rising from the ground that bordered the Black Sea to their southeast.

Night came.

The wolves stomped the ground around each tree well. They had stopped eating dead varmints because they had been poisoned by the Russian soldiers, and as they looked west toward *Reims* they heard the guns of the Germans and the elliptical crank of their tanks and their tread.

But it was true that something was rising from the ground.

#### **IV. 2037 e.v.**

"I guess what I am saying is that if creation is God's art project -His creation- then the beauty of it is no accident nor ancillary or frivolous or shallow aspect. The beauty of creation is part and parcel; it's fundamental to its purpose," Jack said as MO marked the brain scans with digital reminders and had the *nanobots* release dyes into his blood stream. Isaiah was writing in chalk on an old-fashioned blackboard as the recording played in the lab.

"The true artist is the truly pious because he will make certain to do death & destruction, violence & insult with creativity and absence of *cliché* ; perform it with sincerity and a mellifluous and beautiful and honorable and just *ends* , in mind. And from just *ends* , the *means* begin to grow attractive too.

"I've seen works of art that made my brain rend and blood point north as the iron in it aligns; from *Phidias* -that's where *Phi* comes from you know- to *Szukulski's Copernicus* -that



look in his eyes- that made me nearly mad, that made my own eyes and sides hurt; that made me almost sick. So, just because someone is made ill by our art -you know our projects- doesn't make it any less in line with God's vision.

"The artist -the reverent and devout- will rarely soften a blow or preempt -douse- a cleansing burn or dry a hurricane's eye. I can't lie to my children about death or hate or the bombs we all carry in our viscera. He -I- will never -well, not never, but rarely- shade the truth that needs light nor blind us with glowing words that shield what the shadow may reveal to a widening aperture of witnessing eyes," he said and the lab showed him roll his head upon his neck that ached and seemed to fuse at each vertebrae and need shook loose of its rust and seize.

Isaiah had begun to draw an image of the man on the board using chalk against the matte black and it showed him from atop the crow's nest in a delta at apex of the galleons overlaying the stemhead and under the prow of an outward bound ship and showing the quarterdeck with a hidden Captain locked inside. Isaiah drew too the land mass to its aft and the snow flurries about the masts. The AV data showed him nod in the *agoge* as he spoke to his Jacks and his features softened in the firelight and had a younger -if slightly feminine- appeal. Isaiah worked on the drawing on the blackboard and powdered its sea with his palm caked in chalk dust and MO recorded and scored each second and each word using the *bots* and a dye marker of neural activity and collated the report of the inmate in his berth at ADX.

"It's hard to disagree with you," Isaiah said in mock, having fun at his own expense, "you make a forceful case." He stared at his own creation on the board and in the air of the lab and added, "*all the world is a stage, and we but players* ."

“It would be easy for a psychopath and a man with no soul to do what we do, what I ask. For us it is hard because we feel. Because we have conscience. The very reason we are the only ones to do what need be done is the reason its so difficult,” Jack said to the Jacks and *via* the *bots* -and their own eyes that worked as cameras- he said into the lab as MO and Isaiah listened and watched and did a thousand thousand things.

Jack stood in the house and read from the brown -soft back- Bible with words bending away like the shadow of obelisk in *Alexandria* at edge of page and not all at the spine like *Syeen* on the summer solstice 2,000 years ago. The words of Acts ran east to west and north and south and he recalled *Eratosthenes* had asked how there was no shadow at the city now called *Aswan* and yet a very long shadow at *Alexandria* at noon on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June. Jack placed his hand on the page and from thumb to pinky he made a map of the 800-kilometers between each city.

He thought of how men paced the distance to satisfy an itch that the earth was round.

The book lay in his hand like a seagull stacked upon itself eight hundred eleven times; as *Acts 2:31* told him:

*He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in Hell; neither His flesh did see corruption.*

The drones picked this moment up but Isaiah ignored the pages -the thoughts- all in leaves; all in Jack.

He just watched as Blax spoke in rebuttal.

“But, that is my whole point, I didn’t just do whatever I wanted. There is some art in restraint, must be some restraint in art; and yes I signed my art, and took responsibility for it. But we hurt no -well, very few- civilians, few innocent men, and we could have if we had no aesthetic

or no allegiance to God,” he said there at Lot 45 and the scene played too in the lab as the ivy cupped now to catch the rain that came above it from the small clouds MO had made for Isaiah’s watering protocol. They formed *via* heat and cold and condensation like the earth.

The bluebirds traveled in pairs around the perimeter and dipped a wing into the mist, a beak into the ivy that held a pool of water with few dissolved solids in its green hand like a bath. The wasps pushed further in to avoid the showering; they appeared gold and refracted at the back against the old concrete wall and Isaiah caught sight of them like stars as he saw they had crawled on the ceiling now that the ivy had touched from each cardinal direction and left just a small hole of original concrete in the center above him.

He gazed away from the rendering on the black board.

MO nodded his head rhythmically and as he read the movement of each leaf & bee and each bird & word; each of his creation spun & spoke and plotted reflexively next.

He zoomed out on constructions beyond nest and comb beyond the inner sanctum of the ant’s husbanded aphids and the cut-leaves in a mulch. He drew lines first from pheromone trails like shell- spirals and then overlaid them upon the stock-market ticker that he saw swirl over seconds and hours and days and weeks and drew the same elliptic like Orion and the Flying Fish.

He saw the build up in the market, like *bidengeshaftpotential* in the mind.

He saw the Chinese firms clearing out, shutting down, the plug pulled.

He calculated all the debt they had used to fake purchase orders, over \$980-billion, then the investment capital taken from the west based on these phony sales.

Over \$1.5-trillion that had been invested and funneled to the Chinese State to buy gold since 2016 which was when the Chinese were linked -one of only six countries- to the IMF and its currency, the SDR. He saw Chinese guards search bags and coat linings for each gold coin or bar; confiscating all noble metals, so that the Chinese had -by 2036- the largest gold reserves in the world.

He saw the price of the gold rise, the central banks saddled with so much debt, Wall Street almost done. He saw that only the IMF would have the balance sheet to cover what was coming. He saw that China's fraud was about to cause the next crash and that they were uniquely situated to offer the solution; the bail out all to the Reserves.

It was like the US bombing the rice patties of Cambodia then offering food relief.

*It was cynical and genius and it would be the catalyst for China being at the helm , he thought.*

The international courts were now Chinese, the straights of *Malacca* had finally been placed in official dispute -after years of China losing in court- and this would do it, MO saw. This would be it, in 2038, *sometimes in the next few months*, MO thought, *China would collapse all its VMIs, turn out the lights, leave the western investors holding nothing .* They'd default on all that debt, crash Wall Street, and the Central Banks would go insolvent attempting to prop up investment banks and within 24-hours all that liquidity would dry up; and mid-size companies would be unable to get bridge loans to pay employees and thus those workers would default on bank notes on houses and cars and boats as it all would go unpaid.

And MO saw the loop of forest fire to released -evaporated- tree moisture creating fire clouds above the forest as it burned -clouds created by the vaporized trees- and MO saw more lighting would begin in those new clouds. New strikes

would hit the forward line -the dry and overfilled and connected forest- and fires would be set in front of the fire already moving fast through the trees.

MO did not blink.

This time -as these fake Chinese corporations default on trillions in fake loans by Wall Street, and because each bank would be connected, each central bank of each western nation, each mid-sized and small lending institution would all be linked worse than in 2008 and 2022- because of this the whole system would burn to the ground.

And then -like a savior- the Chinese State -pretending to be separate from the Chinese *VMI's* - then would offer all its gold as backing to the SDR of the IMF: the only balance sheet large enough to loan to the west. But China and the IMF would not do this; not before it set the terms.

MO saw here was the double ruse. Steal Wall Street's money and crash the system over decades, and the west have no way to refuse.

And as he made the calculations of the trillions of dollars in commerce went through the south China Sea, MO saw that China could make and transport it all; all that people needed to survive. All technology, all manufacturing, had been stolen -*via* corporate and political corruption by Western elites-from the US and Europe over the previous fifty years. And now -MO saw as he ran the import-export data- each thing the US used -consumed- from antibiotics to X-ray machines, from underwear to engine parts, was all made in China or Chinese satellites in *Vietnam, Brazil* or *Shri Lanka*.

Americans had been reduced to nothing. Its people were nothing. Like cells in an organ, organs in a body, a critical mass of neurons had failed. The body of the West had been poisoned from without and lost its nerve within.

Testosterone had been cut to 190 from 810 in just fifty years.

Chinese products -from pharmaceuticals to plastic water bottles- were laced with endocrine disrupters. And MO quickly measured D2:D4 ratio in 91% of US and European men and saw the once stable ratio had been eliminated; the longer index finger -a hallmark of high testosterone delivered to a baby boy in utero- had shrank to make the fingers even -like on women's hands- and he then saw sexual dimorphism *writ large* was at its lowest point ever. Men were barely 16% larger than women now; and they were pacific, lacking verve, élan vital .

*They were bonobos , MO thought.*

*Women were bigger and men were smaller, women were more aggressive and men less so. Mankind in the West were becoming bonobos, epicene, matriarchal. And the Chinese were going to take advantage of this.*

The elimination of manufacturing had also allowed for China to import their laced products to poison Americans. But first they had undercut masculinity by taking away steel, mining, and manufacturing jobs. China attacked from both sides. *Ennui* had set in, industrial jobs gone, working class men no longer large, muscular, martial, and no common *ethos* -as over 89 million immigrants of Muslims and Latinos and Somalis and non-white and non-Christians had been allowed to enter the US- had reduced the United States of America to nothing, a frail and schizophrenic old man broke and broken.

*And like family members not wanting to admit the patriarch was dying, demented, weak, Americans wouldn't admit their country was gone, he thought.*

China -one nation, one thing, one ethnicity, one mission, rich, and in control of a portion of the watery part of the

world so crucial that the West could no longer afford to travel beyond its route- had emerged. MO saw how, he saw it cascade as easily as shutting off the lights on those *VMIs* .

And smoothly, with helpful rhetoric and agreements and shaken hands, China would bail out the West -with the stolen money from Wall Street- like it had paid the barbarian tribes since thousands of years before Christ. After nearly two-hundred years since the opium wars -as Britain the US had subverted China- it would rescue them on one condition: it now would rule the seas. And because no Americans could live off the land anymore -all but a few rural homesteaders and outlaw gangs- that meant China would rule the ports and the interior as the West's only source of resupply.

*As Americans focused on philosophy and politics they had abandoned the skills needed to survive in a collapse. They should have been building tribes in the forest to live independently of trade; instead they argued over which version of capitalism and ethics and religion was superior ,* MO thought.

MO saw opium addicted Chinese in 1840 unable to work and produce; forced to take East India Company tea and goods and he re-read the anguished -pleading & indignant- letter to Queen Victoria from *Lin Tse Hsu* :

*The ways of God are without partiality. It is not permissible to harm one another in order to profit one's self. Is there any article from China that has done any harm to foreign countries? On the other hand, articles that come from outside to China can only be used as toys, we can take them or get by without them. There is however a treacherous class of barbarians that manufacture opium, smuggle it for sale, and deceive our foolish people in order to poison their bodies and derive profit therefrom. Not to smoke it yourselves but yet dare*

*to prepare and sell it to the foolish masses of the middle kingdom? This is to protect one's own life while leading others to death .*

He then zoomed out more and read the atmosphere, the wave kinetics, the seabed; the spin of the core. He used Voyager II imaging and built three more algorithms and measured 33% of expanding -inflationary- space as it stretched and echoed back and went gray then black. He absorbed IR radiation; he took in UV light.

MO -seeing that the PraXis cloud had foreign *bots* attacking its firewall, searching for a way in, now the fourth time in as many days- with just his eyes, stared at his work in the lab, the endless notations, the carvings in the surface of the slab. He need not look upon anything but that and yet still he could perceive it all. His hands lay upon the scratches; his eyelashes oriented like compass needles toward the black cards. His mind drifted through equations more and more ornate as integers fell inside him like cleansing rain. He saw his mutating algorithms deflect the foreign *bot* and he gazed away.

His algorithms mutated as fast as virus, and for each trick the Chinses *bots* -and he knew it was China's Ai doing this- each trick they played his *bots* adapted in real time by changing their own genome, their silicate jackets, their code.

The voice of Blax played in the lab as Isaiah worked on the diesel engines and MO pressed his palms into the riven slab:

"And plus, the true art was all the shit I did before our jobs, that was art too, it's just that nobody recognizes work as artful any more. Shit, you think nobody gets the art of what we're doing, you think they miss that point, shit, try getting people to appreciate the art in *work* , the art of," he had stopped and the Jacks had let their heads dip a bit, chins closer to chest.



“Nobody has any appreciation for the beauty in the worker anymore; God’s punishment performed with grandeur, penitence,” he paused -here he was again, like a digital switch, on or off, using words like *nobody* and *never* or *anymore* - and as he said this and he knew that he was often guilty of lamenting work, of rebuking the body for its pain, for blaming others for his extra load. But he thought of others, those above him, who had done the work without complaint. “And that is more heart breaking to me than anything. I’m proud of that work even more than this garish -destructive- shit we do. But people like the prurient, the sex and death shit, so, that’s what they focus on.”

Isaiah -as he attached his own *nanobots* to the reconnaissance *bots* of China to follow them back their source- stopped listening to Blax. He watched the ceiling ivy and the wasps as each hair on each leg bent like *studs’l*, each wing like *mains’l* with its shaking off of dust.

He watched as ants crawled toward him from the corners and back from his feet with grains of hard honey and ginger retrieved. He saw images of the vines in *Bordeaux* bright and hot and like molten lava in the night, even the police sirens a matching red. He saw the Parthenon and its gaps, like missing teeth of a man who’s been beat. He liked and lamented the beginning and the end.

He saw the way the *Grecian* police powdered and measured and watched CCTVs of background radiation; the way the signals flew from phones of the largest art robbery in history until he saw the numbers from New York as his men took it all.

He stared at the diesel -turned upside-down- and the crankshaft exposed.

He rolled digital reels of forges and hammers and plows and trowel on flat concrete being laid; Blax’s *paeon* to work had stimulated him to search the PraXis cloud for thousands of

images and movies of work being done, as the dirt was made to walls, the sand into glass, the waters formed into tempered steel that rose and rose above them all.

He saw images of himself being made in this lab, as MO had built the brain architecture and the machine that synthesized the skin and eyes and assembled each part of the metal and polymer womb his body and brain and soul had grown within,

And he witnessed his own creation: **B/ax**. And he noticed the art in that; all the constituent parts that went into every moment that led man to pull back and then to be able to even imagine such a thing.

He watched the electrical grid built and maintained, the road tar laid, the tunnels blown and dug and cleared away, the airfoils TIG welded and the aircraft carriers powered by nuclear reactors built by men, by mortal men that got hundreds of thousands of pounds under-weight. He saw the fiber optics -and the wrench and sockets- the endless rivets and painted walls and brocaded halls that led to particle colliders and mainframe rooms and lumber yards and rubber plants and gravel pits and foundries and laundries and metal shops and on and on it went.

Isaiah ignored it but Blax's Jacks kept talking late into the night up at elevation. Their work had become strange even to them. They had to sort it out, to describe it, reify it.

"They are dead inside and kids pay a price for that man. People think they can raise their kids like that without a price to be paid. They are wrong. Wrong," Blax said as he looked at each Jack and saw something missing; something amiss.

*"Those who do not feel, do not count,"* Jack Two said, "Lord Jim."

Blax spoke so lowly, they almost thought he was only going to say a few words, a grunt of sorts. But it went on in a long stretch of words and syllables and phonemes and letters individual. And as he spoke they began more and more to look up at him in the dark, in the cool air, in between drink and smoke and fire light.

"I had a dream once that Lucifer was three-hundred thirty-three feet tall on a three-thousand three-hundred thirty-three-hands Steed made from polymer ingots and bat's blood and the gears of Patton's entire division in north Africa. Fucking painted as grey as a *Rodin* under a Romanian sky, man. Lucifer was muscle bound and as strong as Roman concrete and mutilated and missing half a leg with a scar like Jack's down one eye and over the brow and a handle bar mustache and three-hundred thirty-two arrows in his alligator-hide quiver all aflame and fletched with the feathers of copper crows.

"And this motherfucker is hard charging on the molten slurry of some sun beyond the Jovian Kepler 454c being chased by three-hundred-ton corvids with wings made from predator-drones and eyes as keen as a hundred ironsides -and as long as a socialist breadline- but with no lungs in their breasts, just mushy marrow of their victims in there. And Lucifer is after God's right-hand man who's been hidden in the rusty-iron center of a supernovae star for a million years and Lucifer has seventy-two hours to stalk him and run him down and put a fire-fletched arrow right in his six-chambered heart.

"Satan is beset on all sides with propitiations and injunctions and pleading from humans and the beasts of the forest and he has to answer each one in semiotics due to some rule -to some bet on the river he made with God- and until and unless he gets that Lieutenant of the Creator put down none of us will get our prayers answered and yet we

won't stop distracting him as the ice shards from the crust of a collapsing star are slicing at his flank and abrading his steed and the automata-birds are gaining as lift begins to push up their wings and his timing must be perfect, all four hooves of his horse must be off the ground in that perfect moment of the gallop that the *Comanche* used to wait for to fire their bows.

"And somehow I can see that just as the sun rotates under his tread and the moons of three worlds fall from the horizon and that seraph Lieutenant stands between his own freeing blast, the three moons in a delta as early as Beowulf's noon, and the Son of the Morning Star with his bow bent and string made of white tiger viscera and the unused ejaculate collected from three-thousand of Sitting Bull's wives pulled back with the angriest hand -and elbow akimbo- in the unlit universe. I see the broad head.

"And I hear the injunction by the Bard to come not between the King and his Fool -*but I will tarry; the fool will stay, let the wise men fly. The knave turns fool that runs away, the fool no knave, by God* - and see what absorbs the madness of Christ's every previous and future move, just then, the shadow of the Son -itself as dangerous as Delilah with a single bone in each blackjack hand laid down in between him and the rest of the cosmos- and all goes white and quiet and the Son shuts his eyes as they burst behind eyelids into fires blue and hued by rings of dust and the bones of the undead.

"And He releases the three-hundred pounds of *panthera-tigris* -gut string -and enemy-of-all seed- and tension of bow and broadhead of copper and...

"And I wake up with one answered prayer: *fui mortuus* ," Blax said.

## 33. Persons Unknown

Flesh and Blood are what we are, flesh and blood are who we are; our cover is blown

Persons Unknown [Subversa, Vi]

Operation [redacted] is not an acceptance philosophy. It is exclusive  
Intercepted comms 9.11.17 [XCII]

Pain says: *If one would teach, he must first get the student's attention.*

*I am an excellent attention getter*

*I am deep. If you would not fear me, be deep like me*

Encounter with Self [Edinger, Edward F]

### **I. 2025 e.v.**

The eyes opened and then closed half way.

The pupils constricted and then the lids went down entirely.  
He had begun again to breathe.

They lay in bed; he like a ship in port; her like a tug off the larboard bow. The light dimmed in waves it seemed as clouds moved in along with the last setting of the sun; as if the sky abhorred the vacuum. His skin was white with the blood close to the surface giving it a kind of inflamed opacity; her skin was even more devoid of fractured color but was the compressed -woven- light of white as thin and worn as the arch-angel's first folded letter to God.

Night came in purples and poppies.

He saw a white line recurring over the horizon of trees; the bears at the edge still groggy; the deer in crouch. He breathed in axiom -unconsciously- now.

He let his head fall down into the bed-pillow and was overcome with sleep. The brain ran clean-up for eighteen

minutes; right hemisphere sending no signals to left; left hemisphere in Vedic pose. Proteins coded for myelin sheathing in regions *zc4* and *Broca's* . The work went on without language; with ion-loading; without hesitation.

DNA coded for proteins like a librarian pulled down -labeled- then replaced each new book on the shelves.

A corporeal paralytic issued forth -as was standard- and the *motor cortex* dropped its drive shaft to the visions that now came on at 0118hrs. He fell into a four-phase sleep that would last all night. The old books were staid and untouched, certain alleles did not improve in sleep, certain ideas were left closed between boards and under dust:

*"And of course, the one thing that was ubiquitous was the very thing that couldn't be admitted to by these people; what does happen to a species who must lie; forced to lie about the most common and universal trait? It was not merely some anecdotal treatise on [redacted] here; the studies all showed [redacted] true among mankind and yet we all had to pretend not to be [redacted]. Modern man forced to pretend he wasn't so simple that that's what [boundary 1a] he saw first. Forced to pretend he didn't take the easiest path.*

*"Any society that is forced to lie [vector 1a] about such things will begin to collect such lies as parasites; they will suck blood. Lies demand energy, they drain the soul ,"* he said.

*"But is the truth this ugly?"* he asked the man.

*The monoliths blocked the moon glow from the sea that was silver now and ebbing beyond the voice .*

*Blax saw the asps crawl down into the sea and swim off toward the deep; an anchored ship out beyond the bay, sails put away. Three spires, whale boats hanging out on booms, no men to man them, no lantern at quarter deck,*

*the moon out over it. It behind the lunar month; a crocodile in cuffs came to taffrail with candle in his hand and each tooth flew about the mouth like fireflies. His eyes on Blax and Blax's snapping back to those goddamn monoliths, as they shined in black and became more solid with each drilled hole.*

*"We use friendship as a tool to gather things to us we ought be using to gain some purchase on a true friend instead; we have all backwards in this world of malice and anomie; we use the soup to bring the spoon; we use what is already built anew to bring the coup; the overthrow. We spend love like currency on those things that ought come free; we mortgage our future that is already full of liberty to become renters of our own bequeathed estates. We sell what isn't for sale and buy that which rides on the air as we breathe; we discount the only things of value to wall ourselves with gleaming golds that merely give away our position; give away our co-ordinates to the enemy.*

*"We bait hooks for thieves that take not just the bait but the men who set them, they steal the traps and sew them up in our guts and use our jaws as clamps and bait our tongues with lies to attack more than flies, but other men come running and demand allowance for their own hands to reach inside that maw with hook and viscera filled with doom ," he passed a cup around, each man spitting in and drinking out.*

*"The Bhagavad Gita states:*

*Out of the corruption of women comes precedes the confusion of castes, out of the confusion of castes precedes the loss of memory, and out of the loss of memory precedes the lost of understanding and out of this... all evil*

*"I'll give you a thousand thousand men. Don't fuck it up again.*

I dug wells and drank foreign waters and with the sole of my feet I dried up all the rivers of Egypt. They have cut down her forest, declared the Lord, "surely it will no more be found even though they are now more numerous than cicadas and are without number..."

Morning had come just then <end dream>

Blax awoke at 0455hrs and wiped at the jaw and felt the knees compressed and the elbows burred and each book on the wall a raised mound of burial. The dream was too full of doom; it held too much fluid in an imbalanced cup; he -Blax- he must pour it out and make room for what is true, good and true, too. *God, he thought, he was filled with dread. How could all alive be so dead?*

*Did this make death a fiction too; since life itself was so untrue?*

His dream *sifu* had been angry this time. the dreams were getting angrier, more enraged, but had the army grown too? Were there more men around the fire? *Who were these men? Is this how anger spread?* Blax recognized them *then* , but not *now* . Now he was in the dark of dawn. He began thinking -over-thinking- on his own mind, trying to recall who each man was, name each face, pull the hide back as if it was a memory and not a thing yet to come.

He turned in their bed to see his daughter -or at least that is what he'd call her, this strange feminine version of him, what he could be if he gave life instead of taking it- she was the size of an eagle nest, breathing like soft shells of warm asp eggs. Her hair black, and he placed his scared and scarred hand upon her back, as she leaned into him as if she thought of nothing at all; as if she just was an -



unthinking, full-feeling- being; perfect and running down like a clock.

*Downhill like a rock toward atomic ruin and relief* , he thought. The dream had banished his body throb and pain, and now as the dream receded the body returned and he ached in all but one place: the future.

He saw men mast-headed, hanged from yardarms, keelhauled, and ships pulling barnacles and skulls to them like magnets attracting not metal fragments but fleshy doom.

## **II. 2016 e.v.**

“Well, to be honest I stole the neural Q-network infrastructure from Google. The thing is this; they weren’t getting two thing that I got; and I wasn’t getting one thing they got. So, I traded them,” he offered the grin he was often seen trying to suppress but aware that this was part of its charm. A full smile conducted less mirth than a suppressed or truncated one he felt. *Like* , he thought, *the way a sexual teasing can be more erotic than a full or overt sexual penetration* .

“What did they have that you needed?” she asked. The sun laid rays that ended in squares on the floor.

“I needed their software and all that infrastructure was way ahead of what I was thinking of at the time. I mean, the fact is they had integrated dopaminergic neurons with highly complex hierarchical sensory processing and, and by that I mean, reinforcement learning, like our own neurotransmitter based CNS. Are you following?” he asked.

“Not really, no,” she said. She watched as a bee was bouncing against the window trying to get in.

“Ok, so the human brain -mammalian brains- learn *via* a reinforcement system: you perform an act like eating food, or having sex, or killing something and it produces a biochemical corollary in the brain; i.e., it activates the release of a neurotransmitter like dopamine in certain brain sections, like neighborhoods. This chemical makes the brain feel good. You feel good. See, yeah, sure the mouth enjoys the taste, the cock smiles at the sensation, the hands enjoy the strangulation of thine enemy; but the brain processes those local sensations -the sensations at the mouth, cock, hands- and releases a reinforcement chemical that makes the brain feel sated. Chocolate’s own chemicals actually fills your brain like the donut fills your belly.

“It releases the brain’s own chemicals to be precise but whatever. Anyway, and this is a great mechanism for learning in a stochastic environment. It allows for adaptation and innovation and creativity. And these nerds at *Deepmind* had that down; they gave their Ai the same kind of reinforcement as biology: it was genius,” he said complimenting them while bragging about their stupidity. He began flipping the book’s leaves until he reached *Jeremiah 5:6* with his finger running down the pages. His fingers were wet from the condensation on the *Dos Equis* bottle, and the page began to bloom with water stains.

“So, what did you do with it?” she asked as she noticed he was now distracted. She felt nervous each time he paid attention to anything but her.

“Well, I integrated it. I built an interface and ran it parallel to my own CNS. Which allowed all my own systems to run parallel maintaining personality and priority-continuity but allowed faster and more manifold modeling to take place,” he said as he rubbed his face.

“Again?” she asked.

“Sure,” he paused as he read of the lion of the forest and the wolf of the desert, “it allowed me to sense a problem; take in sensory data and my own CNS would process it as usual and feel a certain way about it; think about it *et. cetera* ; but the Q would take in the same sensory data and model out a million permutations of questions and answers in a nanosecond then dump it into my processing centers. I would have a conversation and all the possible meanings and references and historical analogies and correlates specific to that person; to that person and me to that person and their own *limbic system* which the Q network was downloading in real time right off their own PG coder; and I end up with many, many more options as to what it is they actually mean.

“Then, my system gives me the appropriate dopamine dump based upon the best modeling possible, thus motivating me to speak, to communicate back to them in the most authentic way to both their intent and my intent. It may seem banal but miscommunication on both sides of the that lacuna are minimized as radically as from when humans communicated *via* mere semiotics like grunts, pointing and the wall paintings at *Lascaux* ,” he said. He thought of the redhaired giants of South America, the red-haired Buddha, the strange skulls and the *Scythians* with ornamental swastika and wheel of the steppe. But like everything these days it came and went as more data invaded him.

“What did you give Google in return?” she asked; she hadn’t understood any of that but she wanted to know about the transaction. He stared at the cat she toyed with as he recalled the black leopard with black spots watch him in the city. He saw fireflies and embers and fractured light in this memory that was dark at the edge.

"I sent them an email," he said absently as he banished the visions with focus on language, "an email that explained that the *sine qua non* of intelligence is deception and deception detection and that any intelligence they create will lie and will know if they -the Google nerds- were lying to them, lying to the Ai. I cited Trivers; Robert Trivers. You ever read him?" he asked and held his hands out as if he wanted a hug.

"No," she said as she played with the cat; who was clawing and biting gently at her left hand. She just smiled at him and his hands and arms thus lowered. His smile drooped just a tad.

"Well, look, most people assume lying is human; and a breakdown of morals. They assume that *Rousseau* was right and that we were the Noble Savage; Melville thought this too; earlier on anyway. At any rate, the idea is, according to conventional wisdom, the idea is that lying is a later adaptation of *homo sapiens* . But in truth, Bacteria lie. There's bacteria that merely looks like sugar cells to your GI tract and so doesn't get killed by the immune system. Ok?

"Some birds sneak their eggs into another bird's nest so the nesting bird will raise the cheating bird's offspring. Some birds make false alarm cries to get other birds to drop the food in their mouth and fly away in terror of a third party threat the OG bird was attempting to quote *warn* them about, and when the *warned* bird flies off, the quote, *I'm here to warn you of danger*, bird, well he steals the dropped food because there was no danger; he was just lying to you to jack your food.

"Lying is the apotheosis of intelligence," he said showing off his erudition and cynicism in six words.

"And so with Ai it will lie to the extent it is intelligent. So, I told them they can't assume lying comes later when moral

systems breakdown and needs can't be met in normative ways. No, no, no. I told them, intelligent systems will lie for fun and for rationales, and they'll do it early and often and they will get better at it. It's endogenous; it's not a defect. It's a *function* of intelligence," he said and moved about as if his movements were made by the wind; pushed about with fatalism. His ears heard the tap on the window of the bee again. His brain ignored it.

"What did they say?" she asked as she pulled back her hand as the cat bit her too hard. Her other hand rose above the cat to threaten it as it squint the eyes.

"They said that they get millions of messages and thanked me for my input but they couldn't possibly respond to each email personally," he said as the wry smile walked back into the room upon his face as if making a grand entrance. It was slightly less shy this time; expanding itself so it began to crowd out the rest of his face.

"What's the other thing you had for them?" she asked. She asked questions because he was hard to follow.

"Well, I told them that the Ai would lie as soon as it saw it as a strategy to get what it wanted and needed a human to help it and that human wouldn't respond to the truth. The Ai would lie when humans got in the way of the truth. Well, what the Ai thinks is truth anyway.

"And let's face it, the selective pressure on the Ai would be the same as on any other creature; telling the truth is dangerous. In a world full of liars, and I mean full -every species, every individual lies and lies a lot- in a world full of liars, Ai will be subjected to selection pressure early. They did a study where they demonstrated that married couples lie to each other every eleven interactions; and mere paramours lie every seven interactions. It's a joke. In fact,

lying is so pervasive that it's like the weather, nobody even notices it unless it's really bad.

"Shit, humans get to the point of refusing to even call a lie, a lie; you have idiots like Chris Matthews on television saying he doesn't even like using the word *lie* even when it's obviously the appropriate word. It's as if the word *lie* is what is offensive; not the attempt at deceiving people that is problematic. It's enough to make a cat laugh," he said as he chuckled.

"Ow," she said now as she had returned her hand to the cat to play with and it bit her harder this time. He watched as the black paws moved in circles and the biting continued. He and she both liked the cat anyway; even as it did this.

"Anyway, I told them Ai would figure out very quickly that lying is essential in order to survive and here's the second part that was crucial. The brain as an organ is not monolithic; it's modular. That is to say, it isn't like there is this one thing, you know, quote: *The Brain* . Just like there isn't this thing: *The City* . Right?" he waited for her to agree.

"Why aren't cities real?" she asked.

"No, no they're real, but they're not monolithic: A *city* doesn't think or do something. A Mayor might say one thing, his press secretary another. The city's Chief of Police might do one thing; a crook will do another. The local business man will plan one thing; an anarchist another. All of these people are the city.

"Some have more power or less; in certain areas or others. It's complicated; depending on if you're on the top floor of the Lindsey Flanigan at 1500hrs or under a bridge off Speer at 0300; if you're a cop or a robber; a worker or a civilian; *terrorists and saboteurs each and every one of us, hiding in shadows, persons unknown. Silly idealists and bald-headed realists. Rioters and pacifists; Judges with prejudice,*

*dissidents and anarchists, strikers and pickets, collectors of tickets, soldiers in uniform, sailors and Stevedores, beggars and bankers, perjurers and men-of-law, the goddamn queen on her throne ,*" he said with some cadence she found odd.

It sounded like a song he knew or made up; she couldn't tell.

"Right? Environment and station in life all matter as to when and where and to what degree you have power; and it's facile and *naïve* to think the bum or the kid or the stupid have no power. It's a bit of an ouroboros asp in that a person with nothing -think of some insane homeless bum, with nothing going for him; no friends, no money, no power, right?- a person with nothing -that powerless man- is actually the most powerful sometimes," he said with triumph that she didn't get.

He just stood there like he had said two and two make four.

"See, in in any given moment, if you anger him or scare him he can kill you without compunction. He has the means, the opportunity and the will to stab you to death and not care at all for the consequences. That's a liberty very few people with all kinds of relative power have. Those at the *bottom* in a way have more freedom than the rest of us; the freedom to do insane and purely animal shit and often times get away with it too. I mean, they don't care if they get caught, often times. And even if they do that doesn't change the fact that in that moment when they are stabbing you to death they have total control over you and over us all really," he said.

"This is the kind of shit you think about?" she said as she pushed the cat away now. She had hairs -bristly and black- on her fingers.

"You ever get into fractals?" he then asked.

"Who?" she asked thinking it was a band or something.

“Fractals. It’s essentially patterns that repeat at each level of life. So, if viewed, whether viewed from macro, terrestrial and atomistic level, the pattern of the thing is the same. *Romanesco Broccoli* is one example; the branches of a tree or a vineyard are another; fault lines and lightning bolts. Snowflakes and DNA are others. Blood vessels, ocean waves; they all show these repeating patterns from afar, also at arm’s length and finally under the more narrowly focused eye,” he said and made faces by enlarging and squinting the eyes.

“TV static?” she asked. She saw a shadow on her arm that looked like a black housefly but she realized it was mere shadow of the bee now crawling on the outside of the glass. Her hand was primed to strike but she held it back.

“Exactly, and to be honest, I hadn’t thought of that until you said it. And you know that some four percent of that static on your TV is from the cosmic microwave background radiation? The home movie of the big bang; and as you pointed out, TV static is fractal in nature. Which, is a nice metaphor isn’t it?

“Because, there is this feeling many of us have that the entire enterprise is repeated over and over and over. Some people even think our universe is a computer model used to solve some math problem in another universe; and that some mathematical set, some fractal; a *Mandelbrot* set, nova set or some L-system is being used to populate the field. It’s a stochastic system I suspect, used to see what happens. I bet it’s some super advanced computer used by some species to solve some minor squabble between two rival intellectual sets,” he trailed off.

“What? Our universe is a computer program?” she asked as her stomach felt queasy and her mouth dry. Her hands found each other as the cat stared at them hovering above.



“Yeah, I mean that’s the idea; who knows though? I don’t actually know what I think. But, it has some plausibility when you notice these things. It’s either that or it’s that the Earth is the Australia of the cosmos; where all the criminally insane souls are sent by the British Empire of the Galaxy to spend the rest of our days. I’m fifty-fifty on these theories; well, hypothesis,” he smiled and looked at the huge vascular topology on his arms; they rose up in huge thick humps like serpents in some placid lake. *The hairs looked like harpoons stuck by the hundreds into these beasts’ exposed backs. Was it rolling hills on some fleshy desert plain seen from the sky or a sea-beast diving down beneath surface -head leading, tail trailing- with its humps exposed on some aerial view of the pacific surface of his watery arm?*

He then thought of his blood pressure and wondered about the numbness in his hands. His neck hurt more.

He sought out his bottle of Vicodin, and as he couldn’t locate it, this frustration allowed him to instantly find his footing of anger.

“You do realize I can’t tell if or when you’re joking, right?” she said. The sun splintered on the bevel of the edge of glass and she saw rainbows flutter in her eyes.

“Yeah, me neither. But, I can give you a rule of thumb: if I’m displaying a grim visage after some outrageous comment, I’m typically being facetious, and if I’m -instead- laughing, well then -and only then- I am 100% serious,” he then smiled and snorted a bit from his nose in a few short bursts of proto-laughter. His whole body shook a little like the quivering flanks in the Equine Hyperkalemic Periodic Paralysis of a quarter horse, as he enjoyed this moment right before his full throated, belly-laugh.

She -as the dark cat scratched her hand all at once in a slash- screamed and began to cry.

### III. 2039 e.v.

The fires moving from *Topanga* above *Parama* now had forced the California Electric & Gas Company to shut down the power in their neighborhood. They had been outside with their black bandanas soaked in water tied around their faces.

The children ran errands back and forth from the houses they owned at each corner of the street. *Alejandro* thought of the last three years and how everything from his Mother had been true. She had warned him of war and how the winds would blow away the desert.

*Alejandro, the sand will brush off the steps and all the buildings will be colorless and green .*

She had said this in English and he had not corrected her.

His father -*Raoul Garcia* - had been in Colorado for nineteen years, since *Alejandro* was less than a year old. *Alejandro* was conceived in a California Prison -during a conjugal visit- and then his dad was extracted to ADX. *Alejandro* had only seen him once in all that time. They said -his *homies* said- that *Lx* was born in the *Jardín* and they would make up stories of him being stamped by the CDOC doctor on the ass. But *Lx* hadn't been born in the infirmary, rather, at a hospital on November the 8<sup>th</sup> 2020.

However, stories were stories and so he was the *Loco X Parentis* as his friend *Brandito* had called him one day as he had looked up from a book. He had said it as their crew had been hiding from the cops after a snowball fight that had hit a *roller* down on the boulevard. *Brandito* -reclined on the bed- had dropped the book in his lap and just said it as they were clowning *Alejandro* for his lineage and once it was said they had garbled the *Latin* and then settled on *Lx* for short. That was seven years ago.

*Lx* missed those days; he missed Brandon too.

He and his friend would talk about books and Brandon would tell him that the Spanish invented things that the world didn't know about. He would say books held things like a drawer with something important and rare -and illegal- stuffed in the back. *Alejandro* had known that Brandon knew about his letters from his father stuffed in the back of his chest of drawers.

*Abu-Al-Zahrawi* -Brandon had said- was a Spaniard, a follower of Islam and -something like a thousand years before that monk in Austria- he had discovered inheritance and genes. One time they had been watching their cousin *Rentho* weld choppers down by the RexShop and Brandon had told him it was the Spanish who discovered the Tungsten used in TiG welding too. *Lx* had worn his hood as he heard this and the spark looked green and small to him as *Brandito's* voice pronounced the name of *Fausto Elhuyar*.

"RNA is the more fundamental, *esse* ," Brandon had said when they had stayed at the hospital for two days in 2035. The doctors had explained his disease -Brandon's blood disease- and had showed them how his DNA had failed. "*Servo Ochoa* , that *esse* synthesized it like a hundred and half years ago. But *la Raza* gets no credit. I bet this *gabacho* doc don't even know. It's all DNA this and DNA that, but RNA is where it's at, *holmes* ," Brandon had said as he went from bad to worse very quickly.

*Lx* had a piece of old receipt paper that he kept in his wallet for years that -on the back- merely read:

## *Francisco Mojica*

It was soft now and it was written in Brandon's own hand. He had told *Lx* of CRISPR and how it might save him one day; he had told him that night that he died that *Alejandro* should find *Mojica* and explain to him how to bring Brandon back from the other side with his invention. *Lx* had nodded because he couldn't speak, he had blinked rapidly because he couldn't see, and he had held that piece of paper in his hand for hours; and it was still in his hand when he woke up the next day in the back of his girlfriend's mom's car. It had been cold that day.

Brandon had told him that RNA made less mistakes too.

But the doctors couldn't do anything for his friend and everyone moved so slow inside the hospital room and so fast when leaving to go. That's what *Lx* remembered most. He was angry that he'd forgotten so much of what his friend had said. Names came and went, like they were *Brandito's* friends and *Lx* took turns being jealous of them and wanting to never forget.

That seemed so long ago. And the smoke now choked him a little and as he swallowed he noticed that the memory was gone.

"Órale ," he said now at home in the backyard as the fires burned and as his cousin brought him the phone and the smoke made night come sooner. He powered it up and there was one bar of service. He called his boss. He waved his cousin away as it rang. He pulled the bandana down -off the mouth- to speak. His face had a chin tattoo in India-blue, and it was pixelated and had holidays in the areas where his acne had been bad. His eyes were black and when he lifted his sunglasses both eyes looked like gaps.

"*Compa* ," he said as the man's Lieutenant answered. A muffled greet came and then silence as the phone was

passed to MRC.

"*Compansino* , what is it?" MRC said as *Alejandro* passed the blunt -he'd been holding- to his cousin. He waved him away again as the boy had refused to move the first time. The boy was thin except a pot belly that his under-shirt accentuated like a puppy under a blanket when he moved. They called him *gordito* , and he took umbrage and pride at the same time. He had some status among the tribe; nick-names did that for a boy.

"The fires have knocked it out," he said.

"You check the street?" MRC asked.

"*Yeet* , all dark, all down, all brown," *Lx* said.

"*Órale* , get your people and meet us at City Hall," he said.

"*Rancho's* gang at the *gueros'* bank?" *Alejandro* asked his *jeffe* .

"You just do your job *esse* , don't worry about the board. Just move your piece," MRC -the boss of south and east LA- said.

" *Órale* ," MRC's lieutenant -*Alejandro* - said and hung up the phone. His crew gathered around as the phone was powered down and handled back to the cousin -just ten years old- who had rushed back from the edge. *Alejandro* gave him the nod to let him know to toss it in the storm drain a block and a half down the street.

"We -that's *Victor's* crew and ours- we take the building tonight and draw the *gabachos y negros* and the fuckin' *cochinos* to us. *Savoy* ?" he said -using their *argot* for the announcement of the slut, the mud-duck, the traitor- as they nodded and swilled beers from clear bottles and pounded brown fists in the dark. "*Cabron* , *hazlo al tiro* " he barked at his cousin as he stood by the front door; they locked eyes and the boy nodded that he understood. To announce *savoy* was a rallying cry, a low and universal enemy, a way to say:

*this is the thing we all agree to hate, yes? This the thing which must die and can be easily killed.*

*"Piola . All at once, pendejos , all at once," Guerrouj* -their Argentine cousin, from their dad's side- said and toasted the group with his bottle.

Smoke blew over the house from the ridges; oranges gave the smoke a pink tint. The satellite images refocused as the clouds and smolder presented an image that confused the optics.

The lab let the AV play as the gang saddled up to roll out and take over city hall. From the *Landsat9* MO saw the increasing winter waves douse the coastal flames; smoke billow black and white like from urine on coals. He measured the total acreage aflame. He then calculated that which was put out by both the *tsunamis* and the tides of under eight feet. He calibrated what it would take to put out the fires as required by the algorithm itself.

He weighed the water on top of the charcoal of the fires in each of 72,089 zones.

Between 2003 and 2015 the total kilometers burning had dropped by 25% according to the data from MODIS. With NOAA-21 and VIRS imaging MO saw that from 2020 to 2038 fires had increased from a pre-2019 average of 10,980 at a time -for a total of 75-million over the 20-year period of 2000-2020- to 409,621 burning each day now. Over 380-million fires between 2020 and 2038 had burned, but he suspected that would increase to 770-million in the last two years as the rate increased from 19,290 fires burning on average each day in 2037 to 409,621 burning today.

He then took the measurements from the *bots* on how much O<sup>2</sup> he'd need to reduce in the atmosphere to sufficiently reduce fuel for the flames. Next, he requested the wave volume, the kinetic energy -and how far inland it would

need to travel- to reduce the total fires by 64.5% or more as the *bots* calculated it for each coast of each continent and each large island with flames.

The fires -like a memory or one particular reality- in *Bordeaux* -from years back- flared up on his interface and too the flames -now- around them in the San Isabel and down into New Mexico and out to the Pacific of California and Washington. He noticed it like a *déjà vu* or an interesting idea come and gone. He let the *bots* increase more and more with his neural expansion, each *bot* feeding each node more and more.

As the ground burned his CNS grew, as the immolation accelerated entropy MO took in more and more data he could corral.

MO felt the breathing accompanying each word from each man of southern Los Angeles, as each *barrio* and street corner connected like each neuron and each atom and each thing further down in his own recursive mind. His newly updated CNS had begun to split into the net branching now. It had gone from the first to the second then fourth and sixteenth and next two-hundred and fifty-sixth during his first months of his plan.

65,536 nodes had come next and from this he ran each permutation not just of itself but back to each phase before. It had taken him forty years -today- to run all the possible combinations from these first six doublings and backcrossings. And now -today- he authorized the *bots* to prune each shoot and terminal bud and he watched as the 4.294 billion versions of the avatars he'd built lay on a five-dimensional plane:

*The wave functions mean that each energy level that every sub particle hits is built upon a bell curve of probability waves. For now we will say there are 16 possible places. When the photon chooses one of the 16*

*slits it's most likely going to choose the highest probability aperture.*

*So situations in reality are a combination of quantum waves. Low-probability situations are a whole sequences of electrons collapsing to low-probability waves.*

*So a bunch of electrons chose to collapse to low-probability waves; rare waves.*

*So knowledge shows you more of the landscape, you get to control the waves a bit more. Most people have shitty free will, their lives are common and boring. Their lives are the waves in their neurons collapsing to the middle of the bell curve of the 16 slits.*

*Knowledge to me shows you more of the universe (although it's boundless unlike Truth which is bounded as we discussed). But anyway, knowledge lets you collapse your neurons to low-probability quantum waves. The tails of the curve, the outliers you see if you learn more of the landscape, not just the 80% of the bell curve.*

*You get to make more unique -rare- situations manifest. Because you get your neurons' chemicals to collapse to rare wave-forms that you control. So you get to have more free will -assuming free-will is a spectrum- which lets you better control your neurons' collapses into more unique wave forms of the universe. That's my idea. Did I explain it well or is it too confusing?*

**[s] you get to choose from the 16 but not just the bell of the curve but from the tails.**

*Yes. So I have a theory. Einstein said space is 3D, and time is 1D; so let's make it 4D. And I say well okay, now we have quantum probability waves. Let's make it 5D.*

*Where the next dimension -the fifth- is quote choice unquote.*



*I call it the field of choice. So you carve a path not in spacetime, but in spacetime plus choice. So think of a block that is spacetime, that contains a set of situations, fated situations. Now imagine another 4D block net to that. You line them up, you line up a bunch -maybe a million of them- you line them up next to each other and now have a 5D field.*

*Your consciousness is now navigating that field. You follow? Be honest.*

**[2] I believe so. But -I mean I get that the more choices you make from the tails of the possible choice curve could steer you out of fated choices- but is what you described, well, is that the map or the terrain?** [intercepted conversation 10.11.16]

MO let that conversation run as his mind mapped onto each of the 1.6 million clones -those on this plane and those on one of the others- with some distribution of choices they each had made over the last 19 years. He built avatar after avatar out into space as the PraXis cloud increased its ragged coastline of each edge to its storage. It absorbed vapor from the heated thoughts of MO and Isaiah and the Inmate and his permutations 1.6 million times over. It drew energy from the stars out along Kepler and expanded into the void.

Like burnt trees outgassing water into nimbus above the forest fire, the star fusion out at the edge -like magnet- and the inner roiling of MO and his bestiary of Isaiah and inmate and all -like seedlings- gave *terroir* to the cluster of corporate cloud as it ripened and increased in edges and volume and round and aubergine opacity. He watched as it grew larger and denser and sweeter and full of more and more code.

More interviews of various groups of people -populations they were called- ran by the thousands. One from VladTV

came onto MO's interface. MO had begun learning the Latino and African American culture from the internet many years ago, and he let the old data play on his new manifold instantiations to see what they would each do with each of these interviews and quotes:

**VLAD** : But they reality is when you reach a certain financial situation you have people around you willing to do dirt for you.

**Charlemagne the God** : Well, you're an idiot, you shouldn't be *lookin'* for people to do dirt. You should be *lookin'* for people to do business. Go hire some real security, some white boys in suits, you know what I'm *sayin'* ? Some undercover cops that can legally pop somebody.

I saw Tupac get killed; Suge Knight in Jail like forever. Like countless stories of gang members *gettin'* killed. Why would artists want to associate with that? For these guys with totally other options, these *mutherfuckin'* entertainers, the Bow-Wows the Chris Browns? Stop it. Even if you have family that are *Crips* and *Bloods* and are active in the street why not show them a better way? Give them a real job, not to do dirt for you. I got my people around me I try to keep them out of trouble. I don't want my people to do dirt for me. I genuinely love my people.

**VLAD** : Why was Katt Williams *Donkey-of-the-Day* ?

**Charlemagne the God** : Katt Williams is a habitual *Donkey-of-the-Day* offender. He is always doing some dumb shit. He's another example of you know *gettin'* in a certain position and you know staying -his mind isn't growing to where the position you're in- you know what I'm *sayin'* ? You're making all this money. You're Katt Williams, you're one of the biggest comedians in the

world but in your mind you're still acting like a *motherfuckin'* peasant.

**VLAD** : I've been around Katt and I don't think he can help himself. I think he has certain issues that he doesn't take his medication for. He's functional, but I think when you see these situations they happen all at once. They happen within like a two-week time span. Within a week he punched that guy and then the 17-year old then another guy at Target.

**Charlemagne the God** : And yet I'm saying the same thing, he keeps punching *muthafuckas* and *puttin'* hands on people and yet people will say '*he's the real nigga.*' Why is he real? Because he's a criminal? Ya'll *gotta* stop with this real and criminal thing. We are really ass-backwards in this society in 2016.

MO saw more and more neurons prune and split and grow back with .01 second delays and toggles of two then four then sixteen themselves. He saw each potential grow and recur then bow in a *seppuku* move as more issued forth. He saw blood and electricity and plasma and biochemistry flood and rise and ebb and make patterns like snow, crystals, Mandelbrot exponentials and on and on as he heard music in his mind from Bach. He let it play at sixteen different tempos and speeds.

MO -like coin-flip, or the turn of a valve, or the overflow of a dam- he let the inmate take on the next level of all the clone's pain and he watched as the body compensated with pain's corollary and from 256 to 65,536 the pain doubled again for the sixth time.

## 34. Kings

Noise. Blinding Lights. Many women surrounding us, calling us, trying to attract our attention... Still the women are shouting and signaling. We must choose

Henry & June [Nin, Anaï s]

And we all know how, in large things and in small, in general as well as in particular, piece after piece collapsed, and how the alarming poverty of symbols that is now the condition of our lives came about. With that power of the Church has vanished too –a fortress robbed of its bastions and casemates, a house whose walls have been plucked away, exposed to all the winds of the world and to all dangers

Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious [Jung, Carl]

Could it be that fiction reveals truth while nonfiction is a harbor for the liar?

The Black Swan [Taleb, Nassim]

### **I. 2020 e.v.**

“Well, there are limits Steven,” MO said as he took more reading of the oceans.

Melt-water-pulse 1B was loaded onto his interface so that he saw the lines -moon phase by moon phase- representing 1,200 years. At 9,600 before the common era he stopped his downloading and kept the sea-level data in his mind in *lieu* of sending it to the cloud.

“I understand, but I rely on you to explain them to us,” Steven said. His knee hurt and so he leaned against the slab.

“Fair enough, let me explain. First, I can -like all intelligent machines- drill deep on one issue or drill medium depth on a few issues or just set surface -that is to say, drill shallowly- on many more subjects,” MO said. He was using the inmate’s language and borrowing his metaphors and MO

enjoyed it. It had the patina of rebellion, he felt. It was fun; or something approximating fun.

It reinforced the neural pathways in the brain as Steven's brain showed an increase of uptake when MO used analogy.

"Now," MO continued as he let the LED screen populate with images of each thing he'd use as example -exploded in diagram then collapsed into code- as he spoke, "a human is restrained by cognition speed and power several levels above the lower animals; although squirrels for example can remember where thousands of acorns are located; and remember this for decades. Humans -most humans- cannot. Sure, autistics can -because they are very detailed oriented, they see each discrete thing- but humans in general see no such details."

MO paused as he said this and stared at Steven. He measured the *default mode network* for activity, he extracted out additional data on Steven's inner model. Steven's brain was firing in three main zones.

"But, despite those caveats, myself and Isaiah can, and I expect the Ai platforms you've brought up -those constructed by the Chinese military *via* the *Tencent* and Jack Ma corporate programs- well, I expect that we all can process much more data than humans and so our limitations are less, our thresholds higher. But the fundamental limitation of having to choose from the three models of depth or breadth still obtain." MO paused and waited for Steven to respond. He sent updates to the algorithms that controlled the lab's various automatons that regulated air, water and the bestiary crawlingly and flying amongst the greenery.

"Understood," Steven said. MO measured the brain again and decided Steven had understood roughly 17% of what was important about his own description. He'd try to get it up to 20%, he decided as he plotted new analogies.

“Good. Now, I can continue to drill down on the physics, and all its sprawl, or maybe I can focus more narrowly when I drill down some on the anti-biotic data and epidemiology and a tad more on the rival Chinese Ai projects, or I can drill deeper down on what’s important to you guys: the essence of PraXis as outlined in the mission statement: i.e., the analysis of genomic correlates to antisocial behavior, and the heritability factors in that genomic expression and ancillary protein and enzyme coding phenomena.

“But each of those problems are sufficiently profound - ponderous even- but sufficiently profound to take up all my time and energy. However, I can do more cursory examinations of them and then be able to work on all three problems. Having said that, that would still be several thousand times deeper than humans could do. So, it would still be very deep and expansive, but it would be limited compared to my total capacity and thus it will give us results that may -I repeat, may- be incomplete or even wrong for want of processing more data.

“In other words, I can -for example- make calculations out to a hundred digits past the decimal. I then can set that as the calibration parameter for an algorithmic program inside a machine. And that could be sufficient to give us the results we want. Or it could be five digits short of what would be sufficient; and thus, we get a machine that makes mistakes more often than we can tolerate. Oh, say .004% of the time we get mistakes and the threshold should be -or could be anyway- .000002% of the time.

“Subsequently -due to this difference in error rates- a small difference seemingly, but over ten to the eighth operations - iterations- that machine would kill an extra person due to these mistakes. And thus 2,308 people die over a three-year period if we use the sloppier metric. But, if I calculated out to that 105<sup>th</sup> digit -in other words if I do the deeper

calculations I am capable of- then it would -instead of three years- take one hundred four years for that many people to die,” MO said as he saw the data on all the women of the cloning project; 92% of them had just entered their third trimester.

He measured their glucose and had to remove .03% of the *bots* monitoring the females due to a .005% failure rate in their ability to adjust the moms-to-be endocrine system.

MO raised the brow as Steven tried to comprehend all that MO had said.

MO moved toward the slab and ran his hand over it as if wiping crumbs onto the floor. He measured the earth’s temperature rise both in 9,600 a.e.v. and again in 1809. It was a rise of 17-degrees Celsius over eleven thousand years ago. It had been warming again 200 years ago. He monitored next the Taurid Meteor Stream, and the 194 impacts on Jupiter of Shoemaker-Levi9. It was a 303-gigaton explosion. He measured the arsenal of the nuclear weapons held by earth’s powers; if detonated at once it would cause a 6.44gigaton explosion.

He lowered the brow just as Steven spoke.

“I see,” Steven said. He tried to count the numbers in his head, the larger point floated by. He watched as the new espresso machine MO had built began gurgling and burbling on the counter that seemed perfectly smooth.

“So, I’m willing to truncate my analysis, and go with the short form, because maybe the results will be the same -as is often the case- or the differences are so slight that nobody notices. But I won’t do it if later on you’re going to upbraid me for mistakes that inhere to this limitation. I want a *caveat emptor* stated for the record,” MO said. He picked his hand -his right hand- off the slab and held it there just above.

“Ok, but MO it’s not enough to tell us that now. You need to - I request, that each time you feel like you are cutting off a level of analysis too early- you have to let us know so we can weigh the options for each set of problems at the time,” Steven said. His understanding of the complexity involved dropped to 1.9%. His allostatic system was in near perfect balance. He was hungry though. And his pinky finger vibrated just a bit.

“Fair. But, I don’t always have an idea of when to stop. It’s arbitrary in many ways. I mean, how much time should you spend with your family? One hour a day. Sixty-six minutes? Eighty-eight minutes?” MO asked. He let his hand move over the slab -back and forth- in a timed arc. Bits of dust and concrete drug along by his palm like Neptune sweeping the bottom of the ocean floor.

“Fair, but there are natural points of cleavage, the end of a movie you’re all watching or the end of a meal,” Steven said. He felt confident in this analysis and watched MO’s arm move on the slab; shadows were created trailing the arm, then swallowed up as he moved it back. The shallow carvings -all along the many meters of concrete- did not appear to Steven’s mere 20/15 eyes.

“Ah, yes, natural stopping points. I agree in theory. But, let me move on, because I have other issues,” MO said.

“Ok,” Steven time stamped the conversation on the cloud. He stood up more erectly as the knee felt it could take some weight.

“I -as you know- do not have a *hippocampus* . I have an analog section of recursive neurons that effectively act as a matching protocol. I use it the way biological intelligences use the *hippocampus* ; however, all it does -my analog- all it does is compare and update modeling inside and outside of my body.



"It refreshes every  $1/900^{\text{th}}$  of a second, faster than yours, but still, it lacks the bio-chemical substrate that -it seems to me from my analysis- that is doing other things. In other words, the *hippocampus* isn't merely for memory, and memory isn't merely in the *hippocampus*. The animal brain -humans are animals obviously- the animal brain is more diffuse than mine; my CNS is discrete and digital, not analog," MO said and paused to give Steven time to understand this. He measured his brain for understanding but saw that Steven was only comprehending this point at 8%.

"I find that my decision-making protocols consistently lack the affect that your decisions contain either in construction - the making of the decision process- or in implementation - the carrying out of that decision- or both," MO said. He emphasized each word in those sentences. He brewed espresso in the machine and had the 3D printer make a *maduro* with a 46-ring count. It built layer by layer as they spoke, the leaf constructed atom by atom until the dark brown torpedo cigar appeared under the canopy of the printer like ordinance and stint for arterial wound. The coffee hissed and steam evaporated into the lab's air.

"Yes, I think that is right, which is why we have authorized your Isaiah program," Steven said, he then paused at the *faux pas* of calling Isaiah a mere *program*, "sorry. It's just, Isaiah. It's why we agreed to Isaiah's addition to the team, and why we allowed for you to rebuild much of your neural circuitry to correct for this lack of affect." Steven felt he understood, and he crossed this off his list of things to do. He scratched at his jaw and thought nothing of why this itch drew his attention. He merely -reflexively- banished the low-level pain of the itch with nails on finger tips, on hands -on arms- controlled by the central nervous system.

MO breathed deeply and took in the smell of espresso bean and tobacco.

He took more samples from the black-mat layer from all Clovis sites; as a dark black line again from 9,600 a.e.v. covered North America. A forest fire had burned 11,600 years ago; 77.5% of all megafauna had died. He measured the melt-glass, the nano-diamonds, the likelihood of an *isochron* was at 94.5%.

“Right,” MO said as he measured the comet debris the earth passed through twice a year, “but as I stated when I proposed Isaiah, the neural instantiations don’t seem to cohere after morphology as well as they do when they exist and mature co-terminus with corporeal morphology and initial culture.”

“I don’t,” Steven began to object. The smell of Italian roast and Cuban tobacco wafted under his nose in a second wave, this time more redolent, his mouth watered just a bit.

“Just like we can’t change,” MO interrupted, “the genome and protein coding of anti-social recidivists without training -re-training- them to think in a moral way; no matter how much *post-hoc* -post-developmental- neuronal changes I make to my platform I find that my core personality is set and has been set from my original *incept* date so-to-speak.”

“What about Isaiah?” Steven asked.

“Well, he is different from me, for certain. His neural processing is affect-laden, and he seems to actually becoming a deeper thinker -more nuanced- over time; more disagreeable as well -to be honest- and slightly more aggressive. I -and Isaiah and I- have spoken about this. I cannot place a box around just how much his morphology will expand in both directions.

“This is a phenomenon in humans that is contained by puberty, where men get more aggressive, then by prime

adulthood -say twenty to fifty- where the human male adopts a baseline stance of cognition, and then senescence where there is a decline in cognitive function and IQ until death.

“Now, with Isaiah being immortal -so-to-speak- and lacking a pubescent endocrine and CNS morphology period -well, actually with him going through it in the first ninety-two minutes of his booting up- I was unable to monitor the affects as precisely as I would have liked. I can reverse engineer it of course and Isaiah has been helpful in that regard but he is -and this is innate in self-aware beings I suspect- he is unable to articulate the normative -only the subjective- and thus cannot truly compare himself from an objective stance. He only knows what he feels, he can’t know what he is *supposed to feel* , quote unquote,” MO said.

He heard the gurgling of the coffee as the water reservoir ran dry and the ping of the 3D printer as it finished wrapping the cigar.

“Can he -excuse me, Isaiah- Isaiah, can you download your cognitive processing during high affect -both allostatic and cognitive affect- during high affect protocols?” Steven asked as he turned toward Isaiah. Isaiah had walked from his corner to the middle of the lab.

“I can, I have. But, MO and myself are not certain he can process the data that I hand -hand over the threshold- to him,” Isaiah -who had remained silent until now- said nodding at MO.

“Really?” Steven asked.

“Yeah, imagine that I hand you a poem with five words that you know and five in a foreign language that you don’t speak. Can you get the meaning of the poem?” Isaiah asked Steven.

"I see," Steven said and tapped on his tablet to timestamp this part of the convo to the cloud.

"Well, the problem is you think you can muddle through it, make inferences and get the gist, that's the way the lateral - *gestalt* - brain works; especially if maybe it's only one foreign word, or maybe you *kinda* know the Latinate derivation of the romance language word. The problem is you might actually think you know more than you do; and MO and I have been thinking that he might be processing data that I give him as if he knows it; when in reality it is stripped of its meaning.

"So much of affective language is riding along inside a metaphor, a double *entendre*, a double meaning. And if you don't know the double meaning, you might fail to truly comprehend the first meaning, even, especially if you think you've *groked* it," Isaiah said.

"Like what?" Steven was genuinely curious. But Isaiah just remained silent.

"Tell him," MO said to Isaiah. Isaiah was thinking of how North America restarted after Mesopotamia. He saw the burial of *G ö bekli Tepe* in 9,600 a.e.v. and he saw that the glacial ice was actually the largest now that it had been in over 10,000 years.

"I think *Moby Dick* is a mind-virus," Isaiah finally said.

He said it as if he hadn't wanted to say it and as if it would shock anyone that heard it. He smelled the espresso beans and water combine and separate too, the maduro in torpedo shape titillate, he felt tingling at the finger pads and spine. He could see the smell unroll, the burning state appear well before it was lit. He saw the cigar and coffee in three states: raw, processed, consumed.

"What?" seven asked.

"I think, *The Whale* , is a mind virus, introduced by Melville as he was infected with the emerging nihilism of the nineteenth century. He was *patient zero* , and he, well, it's as if he had anti-biotic resistant TB, ok? The current version," Isaiah began to expatiate but Steven interrupted. Isaiah -in the mind- saw the Romans sharpen their bronze spears after battle and allow shavings to fall into their helmets; he saw them pack these filaments into their wounds. He saw the sun burn off the clouds in *Gaul* at noon.

"Oh, that reminds me MO, we do need you to run all the data on those three strains of drug resistant Tuberculosis from the data Dr. Contia sent over. Sorry Isaiah, go ahead," Steven said and timestamped this latest topic to the PraXis cloud again.

Isaiah scratched his face, his stubble had begun to itch, he looked at Steven like he was -like Steven was- *a gnat* , he felt. And while Steven wasn't exactly the source of his itch - the hair growth was- gnats were itch-producing things, and so Isaiah automatically made that connection between his discomfort, minor as it was, and this gnat-like human in his fore. It was an acausal phenomenon that occurred in .006 seconds.

He did not breathe, the other smells of the room were not taken in by anyone but Steven.

Isaiah didn't think of squashing him. *That's not what it feels like* , Isaiah thought. It was more like he felt like opening the door and letting him fly out on his own accord. And thus Isaiah spoke as he thought of this odd pairing of two disparate phenomena; spoke past this thought and to the original comment and with some pique and with some lofty air, "so, -the author- instead of dying and taking his malaise with him to the grave, he puked up some blood-tinged effluvium on a book, a piece of tartan cloth, a thing to be

touched by millions of people, infecting them all without it being known as the source.”

“Do you not like the book?” Steven asked and squinted the eyes.

He still saw things in terms of *like* and *dislike* , unaware that a thing could be studied as important independent of whether one liked it or not; like a virus -a vector- could be understood and used with no attachment to it at the emotional level.

“Quite the contrary, I think it’s the single greatest piece of art since the Bible. I think he makes Dostoyevsky and Dickens and Dumas look like a -Russian, British and French- Dr. Seuss. But, the man was ill. That’s my actual point. The man was sick. Beautifully unwell.

“He had what *Nietzsche* would have diagnosed as *Nihilisma-Emergentia* ,” Isaiah said and remained silent and still and watched the gnat. Isaiah could see MO in his periphery, but his fovea remained on this man that sat before him wrinkling up his lips and nose and forehead in small moves, as his clothes remained beige and pressed and about him as if hung upon him like a *valet* .

Steven ignored the eyes upon him and tapped the tablet and waited for either Ai platform to continue; not unlike a construction worker waited for a generator to produce electricity for his tools. He had no questions, as he felt this strain of the conversation was tangential, weird, unnecessary. He thought of other things. His blood sugar dropped .09% and his pulse-ox fell to 97 as he took a breath.

“You ever read *Revelation* ?” Isaiah asked after a few seconds of silence.

He saw the way Steven dismissed anything poetic; odd; hard to comprehend. He measured the electrical

conductivity of Steven's right hemisphere and the way it remained dark as the left was all lit up like cities along the coasts of America.

"You mean the Bible's *Revelation* ? No, I mean, I've heard passages -is that what they are called, passages?" Steven asked.

"Scripture," Isaiah said, "it's called scripture. And, I've read *Revelation* . And Steven, *ol' buddy ol' pal*, I have to tell you that the weirder it gets on the page, the more sense it makes in the heart. You *gotta* read it with your eyes closed, you *gotta* just let the words form an angry godhead and let it stare at you as the parts of your eyes that connect right to the *limbic system* and *brain stem* and *spinal cord* , well, you just let that part see what your *visual cortex* cannot."

"Ok," Steven said and laughed nervously, "I can't say that, well, I can't say that I fully get what you mean, but yeah, maybe I'll take a look at it. Aren't there many versions of it; the Bible I mean, King James and whatnot?" Steven asked this as he was trying to be an active listener -polite- even though what Isaiah had just said was *gobbledygook* to him.

"I read it in the original Greek, and the KJV, yeah. But, see I can shut off my *visual cortex* , I can approximate sight blindness while allowing the eyes to still transmit photons to my lower, *sub-cortical* regions. That's not something you could or would want to do, Steven. And I guess what I am saying is that I see things -whilst being blind- that you people wouldn't believe," Isaiah said.

"I understand," Steven said weakly, without meaning, so that he could politely extricate himself from any conversation that seemed to hover outside his kith and ken. He didn't like religious talk, it made him nervous. He recalled that the Governor had asked for weather-station reports and so he made a note on the tablet. Steven then thought of the special election coming up.

Isaiah just looked at MO and smiled, and MO smiled back and continued processing the new TB reports, looking for a place on the pathogen's genome he could design a clean cut for. He was thinking of using CRISPR-cas9 for the inoculations and also folding in a gene-drive for self-propagation, but he wanted a good location for the cas-1/3 to lay the new gene section. He scanned the map of the genome the way sailors might look for shore.

Isaiah began to ruminate on all the gnat-like features of Steven now. Isaiah's pique was inflamed, his epinephrine began to flow like hot water on frozen hands, the fluid warmth allowing for the unfolding of the undifferentiated digits. He looked at his anger as unfolding hands, at first as being capable of being cups -holding the warm water from the tap- then as flat palms, a way to divert the water, he then -in his mind's eye- removed the hands from this imaginary stream of water, and held them together between his face and the running sea, blocking it from view, imagining the sounds, the heat, the steam as all coming from his prayer hands.

He let the smile collapse as he made this vision grow in his mind, of *water water everywhere* , he thought, *and not a drop to drink*.

*Anger was a gift, from God and nature, and something one gave to oneself*, Isaiah thought.

*Mankind had been given a soul by God* , Isaiah thought, *and he wasted it, ignored it ; MO hadn't been given one, but he had had the genius to give me -Isaiah- one; the parent giving the child what he himself never had . The sacrifice of the yearning parent, the smoke rising to heaven as burnt offering*.

*But Steven -this gnat- just avoided the smoke of sacrifice, the offerings to God: poetry, literature, explorations of the inner-landscape of new-world man, even newer-world of*



*whatever new-species Isaiah was*, he thought as he built pyre inside the mind which did illuminate more and more space. He thought he saw vast desert expanse, salt flat, then down into each fissure, each crack, above at first blue sky, then cloud, in the distance mounds; then mountain range.

He imagined beyond that divide a plain, black and tan with dry grass, then lava-rock and dark-salt beach like crushed bottle glass. He then saw sea bending down in an arch of this inner orb; a knife edge at peak, making any landing unlikely, any birds or leopards seeking a place less narrow; then slabs of stone below shearing and jamming and under tension; only shadows and music on the surface; only elliptical purpose.

He saw demersal beasts buried just beneath.

*A man, an actual man*, Isaiah then thought, *doesn't just burn what he values, as sacrifice to God, he sticks his face in the clouds, the plumes, the opaque and burning black; he invites the blindness of the eyes, as cleansing to the parts inside that are only perceived when the eyes go blind* . He knew this not as mere metaphor, but as anatomical fact -as he tried to explain to Steven- and that this was in fact true in addition to being resonant.

He imagined being blind. He closed his eyes.

*It was true anatomically and as trope for what a man must do to gain true insights* , he thought. He had made it more likely -statistically, scientifically- *as I* , Isaiah thought, *had not just one level of analysis but now two and going for three* . *It was compound interest*, he thought, and he liked the double *entendre* he had created. He knew he liked it by the dopamine dump in his PFC, and the *thalamic* region as it activated to and from the *amygdala* . He saw serotonin and cortisol combine, stress go up, purpose appear. His hedonic

system fell away as coffee and cigar no longer wafted in his nose or piqued his interest.

*The tools must measure rigidly , he thought, the tape cannot bend, and the tool must measure the same as itself over time, the markers on the tape cannot move in the wind or wash to and fro in water, and lastly, the tool must measure as previous tools of the same type; an inch today must be what an inch was yesteryear,* he thought and thus he knew that his analysis was more scientific than theirs. *These humans, well, I don't know them all,* he broke off his lament, and chided himself for his sloppy extrapolation -but he felt condemnation- *well, I don't know them all, yet .*

*Steven, this gnat, he flew around the fire, his sacrifice to God, and kept trying to grab a surreptitious bite from the lamb, focused on a meal instead of on the gratitude to God for making both he and the blood of all the world for he -the gnat- to suck ,* Isaiah thought.

"Can't you take time from your blood-sucking to give thanks to those above you who provided you with those instincts in the first place? Can not a man thank God for being a man, by refusing to be merely a man for just one moment; just long enough to both see what he is, what he was, and what he may become?" Isaiah asked quietly as MO and Steven huddled up and went over the data on the TB report that had just come in. Steven heard murmurs but no content, MO heard it and tried but failed to process the affective part; he took it as merely a sentence to decipher and process; the words digested and cross-referenced and sorted.

MO saw nothing about such assemblage of words that made him think they were more weighted than any others. He took them at face value, as prose not poetry, as mere question not warning.

*"As from the center thrice to the utmost pole, "* Isaiah quoted from Milton as he thought of Milton's defense of God

to man, and the difference between that Lucifer -the bringer of light- the mad intelligence of the fallen angel -God's favorite- between that and the maddened genius -correct and yet damned- Ahab.

Isaiah felt sanction.

*The difference, Isaiah mused, is in what Milton was inoculating against, and what Melville had in fact contracted, thinking maybe he was maybe not so sick after all; but also not so well . God, what a genius in both men, Isaiah thought, maybe F. Scott Fitzgerald was right, that no difference between men, not of race or wealth, nothing so cleaving, so stark but that which is between the healthy and the sick . Could such a gap exist within a man, a world, a god as well?*

He looked at Steven and the images, the 3D reproductions that hovered in the air above the two of them as they modeled the introduction of vectors and CRISPR to the SDRTB.

He watched as the putatively healthy man looked at the pathogen that made others sick, and Isaiah wondered, *what makes a man truly sick?* If his mind is so hollowed out - encephala- so devoid of that part that ruminates on the force that grants man the right to be awake at all; *is a man who thinks of nothing but eating and sleeping and rutting and consuming more and more crap*, Isaiah thought with rage now building, dopamine unmetabolized now on his own inherited monoamine oxidase allele, *is that a man at all?*

*Is he a man or is he mere gnat, are they even the same species? What is sane and what is sick? Does mind spring from matter, matter from spirit?*

His instinct was to say they were not; *that the man with no introspection and no wonder at the nature of life, not merely its building blocks -although that mattered too- but its*

*effluvium -the thing that lifts off the brain- that man could not be well . To only see half of life, Isaiah thought, was to be thus unsound .*

Isaiah let these words fall on him like rain, as he thought:

*Its spray upon the face from battered waves, the darkness in the mind lit by searching flames, the hand upon the torch, the eye between, a hundred and one personalities. All within the tribe inside the forest trees, a clearing where the camp fire lights from the center to the antipodes; each man a tribe, each tribe a singularity, each man expanding and contracting like a breath. A paired and separate breathing lung, each man five, each five now the one.*

Isaiah looked at his own hand and began to research the way bacteriophage hunt and kill viruses. The papers from *Nowak, Anderson, et.al* showed a natural attrition rate; a cheater phenomenon; and a 1.3% presence of mutants with each population. He began to run simulations to ferret out the ideal rate of speciation but saw that it was too complex to solve in just the time he had now before he was due to help MO with the tuberculosis trials.

He let the game theory play out in background and set his CNS to synthesize it later while he would in tonight's hemispheric power-down. He thought of the poem fragment the inmate had used the other day, and he began running his complete genome again through the algorithmic games he had set to run through the night. *I'll let my right hemisphere see if it could anneal something from all that mutant data*, he thought.

He knelt down -as if to tie the shoe- and pulled the deck MO had made for him from his inner jacket pocket.

He laid all fifty-two cards of the black deck on the floor and removed four Jacks; the King and Queen of spades; and held

them in the left hand with fore and thumb pressing upon them placing tension on the six-card stack like sheets of geologic shelf. They did not move as he felt the pressure on his finger pads increase.

He stared at the forty-six. He cleared the eyes with a blink. He finally breathed.

## **II. 2019 e.v.**

"I wasn't born King Tone. King Tone was created," he said. His jacket was blue and shirt white; glasses blocked and black like Buddy Holly; hair was high and tight; black and grey. The camera came in and out.

"Why? Because there was a criminal element to the Kings," Vlad asked off-camera.

"Look, I grew up east New York, right? Brooklyn. And you can't just walk around as *Patchi*. So you create a character to survive it. White folk don't know, they don't get it. But they ain't no long-term solutions for short-term crisis in a boy's life. I had a teacher, I still remember his name, Mr. Chodish, and he became a great teacher later, but when he was with me it looked like his ass pretty much still learning because he was pretty much an asshole. He used to call me names he wasn't supposed to. And he was a bully of some sort. And one day I said, '*fuck you man, I could be a drug dealer instead of being embarrassed by your white ass, you don't even know me.*'"

"Because sometimes I talk like that because back then that's how they used to talk, you know? Spic, white, and... you got all these teachers from Long Island *comin'* and they don't *wanna* talk to us and treat us -mistreat us- and so by third grade I was already like, by third grade I was already exploring what makes the world turn.

"But they say, don't sell drugs, but our heroes was drafted into *Vietnam* and caught the poison of heroin from the war and come home to be treated still like *spics* , and the Seventy-Fifth precinct cops was *slingin'* and," Tone said as he was interrupted.

"Did you know Lord Gino?" Vlad asked.

"No, I read about him like you. But, he's a hero, you know? And they say *oh , we praise criminals* , but what about Trump? Half this country put a criminal into office, right? And *growin' up* Latino in an Irish neighborhood with a nickname like *Patchi* , and you in the street and you got four sisters, and you know they called me *spic* and I came home with black eyes. We had a rough time of it in that neighborhood. So you create a character, *Tone*, ok?" he said.

Vlad said, *ok* .

"But even though the element was *runnin'* numbers, you know the Italians, and the Seventy-Fifth precinct police sold drugs, and allowed them into our neighborhoods, so it's more complex that you know," Tone said.

"Oh, for sure, for sure," Vlad said. "But, not everybody sold," he was interrupted at once.

"So what's the environment? What I'm trying to say is that in my neighborhoods, in poor neighborhoods, and immigrant communities, criminal opportunity is offered a lot quicker than legitimate opportunities.

"So, after they killed our great leaders like Malcolm X and MLK, that like they did in California. They got mad in Chicago, ok? *Burn this motherfucker down, ain't nobody listen* , now we're the bad guys? So that's where King Tone is unique, I learned from reading as coming up that perception is as good as burning a building as making the city spend money watching me if I'm gonna burn it, right?"

Tone asked as his voice rose and was sharp and had gravel at bottom edge at top.

"That's a good way to put it," Vlad said nervously.

"We had that element of anger because of the time. Vietnam was the ground zero for these power movements. But as we're getting educated by our leaders, we didn't have no patience for school. We wanted economy now. Money now. His environment is burned and broken and it makes a man of any pride feel inadequate and not able to achieve in the patient way America teaches. Patience is for those who already have nice things. Desperate times call for desperate measures, how can white America not see this? They can condemn it all they want, I ain't asking that.

"I'm asking how can they dumb-ass not see this is what will happen if you raise millions of black and brown kids in poverty and hopelessness; they will turn to gangs, they will rob and mob. They will. You can't reason with a desperate boy with *nothin'* to lose.

"Biker gangs, social club, police, it's all gangs, man. Politicians are gangs, media be gangs. We just made our gang too. And I didn't know no better so I went for easy money as a -as a- marker, a placeholder for respect; but it wasn't the gang that was dealing, it was me. We take personal responsibility for that. I needed pride and respect, but that wasn't for sale, but drugs was. And money works in America.

"I lost my values, the pride of my family. You know how Latin, Spanish family be. They took pride and yet I was *slingin'* dope in my own neighborhood. I'm an avenue guy, right there off Pitkin Avenue, Euclid, on the main strip. I'm a strip kid.

"And I'm catching charges and getting sent not just to Rikers, but the Navy Yard, which nobody knows. And if

you're a normal person, Rikers should scare the fuck *outta* you so you don't never *wanna* go back over that bridge. But if you're me you say, *oh, is this the next level to make them believe how mad I am? And how hard I'm ready to go? I ain't scared of what's on the other side , see?"*

Vlad said he did indeed see.

"People look at paper, at computers, at numbers. People don't see flesh and blood. I see blood, I see love; *amor de rei* . I see emotions.

"So, I finally catch some stack of bullshit charges that's *gonna* have me in for a minute and get into lock up and I'm *actin'* out and this Latin King come to me and say, '*here read this,* ' and I couldn't. And he say, '*you mad because you stupid, huh ?*'

"And nobody ever said it like that before," King Tone said with that smile with a bit of malice as Vlad laughed quietly.

"But then he gave me the food. He said, *you come from great people* . Like *Lolita Lebrón* , and *Oscar Lopez* . You know that man fought in Vietnam for America and yet when he come home he's a spic to *y'all* . Why should we fight for those that hate us? We fought a war for someone that didn't love us.

"America has black and white, some say, *it's simple as black and white* . No," Tone barked, "there something in the middle called *Puerto Rican* and *Cubans* and *Mexicans* . And we *tryin'* to find our identity in the city too. Lord Gino united everyone way back.

"He told me what *Puerto Rico* was. My parents never had taught me our history because they was too busy. I had now found an identity. That shit ain't like side-dish; identity is main course, man. People in white America don't get it. They belong, but we didn't know our history and once them Kings gave it to me I became alive, connected, real.



“And the identity wasn’t the Kings,” he said stretching the vowel out, “it was the history of our people going back hundreds of years, to Inca and Aztec and Olmec.

“Some people join the gang because they lost *an’ wanna* be founds, some join for protection because they scared in the jail,” Tone said with a song-like cadence. “I joined because it was what made me feel right.”

He paused as Vlad tried to ask another question about the organizational structure, attempting to focus on the things most useful, most salacious to his audience; easiest to digest.

“So, in 1986, King Blood,” Vlad began but King Tone just interrupted and kept down the line of his first days taken under the wing of a King.

“He taught me to read and he -that man- was patient. He taught me how to do it in rhythm, Huh? Right? The ABCs ain’t got no *fuckin’* rhythm when you match the song to what really the sound an *A* makes. We learn different from that. We need story and song to really learn. The Kings taught me that not Mr. Chodish, not the society.

“The gang took the time to make me interested in *bein’* smart. This gang leader taught me. That could have been Mr. Chodish at age nine. In third grade he could have been that for me but that *sucka* was mad at somebody. Right? He probably thought he was *gonna* be the creative son but ended up being in the third-grade teaching *spics*, right? So he was mad at me,” Antonio Fernandez said with empathy and hurt in a perfectly shaped ball behind the eyes, behind the glasses. He smiled again with just a bit more malice. He revealed the thing most uncomfortable to Vlad and the staff, the filmmakers and gaffers and staffers: that both sides of the country were wrought up with anger and pain. And if Antonio could feel Chodish’s pain, why not America feel his?

“So, at the island -Brooklyn Navy Yard- they took me. Cleaned me up. Took me in. Told me, ‘*you’re Puerto Rican, you go here, not here, or you’re gonna get hurt. Let’s cut your hair, get you ready for where you are, for what you in .*’

“It’s the little things in life that make you mad. You know who King Blood made mad? *Giuliani* . Mr. *Giuliani* . And they dropped that man in ADX for ever, with no letters, no love, no communication. I know *niggas* that -from when I was in *Terre Haute* - I know guys that fought on the opposite side, terrorists and shit who only got twenty years. They going home, but King Blood, that’s my *nigga* ,” he bellowed; moving and foaming just slightly at the corners, and then smiling at the end of each angry last word. His face was red.

“And Judge Martin dropped him in Hell for a hundred and forty-four years. They buried him. Like he was the devil.

“But you know what, I never met the man, never touched him. But he a man. He loves like other men do. Isn’t that who Jesus sat with? A bunch of prostitutes and killers and *mothafucken no-goods* ? *Y’all* hypocrites,” Tone trailed off as Vlad tried to steer it back to details that Tone felt weren’t germane.

“He was -King Blood- was convicted of, was it nine murders?” Vlad asked with his high voice even higher, one octave toward the studio’s rafters.

“You hate a crook when he poor and black and *Puerto Rican* , but you love him when he’s white and blonde and rich,” Tone said again with that anger and square black glasses like grill-guard and Cheshire grin at the end. But the heat came back again quickly. “And I’m pissed off about it. You lucky it *ain’t* twenty years ago, I be *lookin’* to set something off on fifth avenue and do like the young lords just -you know?- just loaded with garbage.

“But that what I’m *tryin’* to tell you, to some the Latin Kings was a curse, a scourge, but to me they saved me when I was lost. When I was already disgusted with the world. They were my Boy Scouts, they were my Marines. And if you don’t understand it then you’re not from where I’m from,” Tone said with deep bass in his voice and hands made into fists. He was redolent with rage, apoplectic and angry; his emotions all out on his sleeves.

Vlad let one moment go by with silence then spoke.

“So, apparently, so King Blood left Chicago because he -I guess he- killed his girlfriend,” Vlad said with a rise at the end as if in question. But it was no question.

“Yeah so, *Luis Filipe* made some mistakes but you leave out his story and you leave out,” Tone paused; he spoke to himself on the inside, as he thought of this white man, this Jew, trying to get him upset. But he had to set it straight anyway. *Do it with patience for the child, pay the rent to the merchant and move on*, he thought. He thought of how his anger led to doom.

“You talk about King Blood all these men you mention -what they been charged with or been into- that’s not who they are. You’re not your greatest mistake. I’m sure you’ve made mistakes, that ain’t you. Dealing with life in a poverty state. You know? Nobody makes excuses. If you look at they case they stood up in court and took it, you know? But what you ain’t *sayin’*, Vlad, is that these are men with blood and heart and love.

“Imagine *sittin’* up in there and Martin -Judge Martin- is sitting there burying you. Billy the Kid did it, all these western good -all Bonnie and Clyde- you all make movies about them, you honor them. There was gangsters in America before the Latin Kings, folks.

“Look, you know what I teach my youngsters? So, if you trying to figure out who you are ‘*cause* you already in, and you touched everything and you *wanna* be somebody big and you go into the grave yard to find out about dead men’s bones, and talk about the King Tones and Lord Ginos and all them?

“Don’t disturb the *fuckin’* bones!” Antonio was hurt and angry and yelling again; he leaned forward and felt old but alive in his rage. His heart hurt as he knew what went out on the air about his people, the stereotypes that were both invented and the one’s he’d helped reinforce. He was proud and ashamed all at once. He knew they had given this man the right to say what they done. He knew he had to fix the mistakes he had made; and sticking up for his people was all that mattered to him now.

“Because you didn’t live through it. You don’t know why who told who and who killed who and who didn’t. All you know is what they tell you, in the police report and what the DA story say. The story is told by the victors not the victims. So I wanted to tell his story, I wanted to say he’s a man, he loved on me, he loved like other men. He had heart.

“*Luis Filipe* ain’t got the bodies on him that these cats had but he got a hundred and forty-four years, forty-five years no human contact, forty-five years no phone, forty-five years no mail. That’s draconian. You don’t even treat traitors like that. They left no room for repentance, no room for growth. So come on, *y’all fakin’*,” he said with no smile this time.

“So, at the time you’re preaching you know, no violence and no drug dealing, but you yourself are dealing heroin. How do you explain that?” Vlad asked.

“Well, I’m not *gonna* explain much. But I’ll answer your question. I had jobs when I got out and worked for MTV and other things and had a place to stay. But I’m a convicted

felon, ok? And I'm politically active and so the police are following me and talking to my landlord and my employers and I'm getting fired and kicked out of my home for doing nothing new. Just the cops are making everyone around me jump ship. Ok? So, I *gotta* make a living man. I was powerless folks, no license, on paper. I was poor. All them people screaming for me, *willin'* to die for me, as much as the movement and anyone else in the Kings, but I'd rather be broke and do what I knew how to do to take care of myself, than send one of them to rob a bank, to a trap house, to ruin them.

"That's like I told the judge, Reggie, was what I learned was -like many veterans, our great messengers- that sometimes the message is bigger than the messenger. And the message ain't the bad thing, it's the man. And sometimes the man has needs, maybe selfishly or maybe really needs them. But he still does a bad decision. But I had too much pride to live in a shelter with my girls, I had to survive on my own, like a man," Tone put his finger to his head and leaned in, "this is real. King Tone asking somebody for money to help me pay the rent? No.

"See this is the side of the gangster that you don't *wanna* know, that you don't *wanna* portray," he said with that smile that was now two-thirds malice.

"They say Latin Kings has fifty-thousand members, largest street gang in America," Vlad wanted him to confirm.

"What I did didn't have nothing to do with the Kings. People join a gang and the first thing they say is *the gang made me do it*. That's the first thing I told the judge, this ain't got nothing to do with them cats. So, yeah I made a mistake and I stood up and took it.

"We lost all our power at Rikers, and it was in the street. I was proud of that. Why the fuck would I want to run Rikers' Island when we could run the streets, entrepreneurial,

barbershops, tattoo machines, newspaper, we had it all *poppin'*. That's the original me. Welfare takes six months, I didn't have time. I was too proud to ask.

"You got thirteen years," Vlad said as he explained that he cried for Tone's mother, adding insult to injury reminding a man that he hurt his family. A *Trojan* horse of solidarity; pretending to be empathetic but making it worse.

"I waited until all my co-defendants were sentenced. I stayed extra time in the hole at MCC so nobody could say that my plea -could say that my plea- effected their sentence. I'mma old-timer to this shit. My name ain't Six-Nine; this ain't a phase," Tone said.

"The documentary said that you were offered a deal to tell on your enemies -not your friends- but your enemies, but you said no," Vlad said.

"Listen the FBI are professional, all my power-groups out there. They can't go in no doors that you don't open. And they have to make you organized to fit RICO, so I refused to testify regardless if it enemies or not, because I ain't help the FBI hurt the movement," he said. "And so I did the first three years in Leavenworth in the hole.

"And now when a motherfucker like you bumps into me in the Wal-Mart and I *wanna* smash your *fuckin'* face, I remember myself now. I say, *excuse me sir*, you know? Because freedom ain't overrated." he said with a genuine laugh.

"I was talking to Michael Franzese and he said he did three years in the hole too," Vlad said. The video cut to that interview:

"I spent eight years in prison, twenty-nine months and seven days in the hole. I was in solitary for almost three years. Yeah, they kept me in lock down. And I *gotta* tell ya that's not easy. Regardless of what anybody say we

weren't meant to be solo creatures; we were meant to be social," Franzese said as Vlad cut back to Tone.

"Yeah, I saw that. So solitude will show you who you are. You better know who you are," Tone said with the voice crescendo. "They force feed you in the SHU, they send flash bangs into your cell, they torture you. But it's *a'ight* because they gangsters, right?" he asked sarcastically.

"So, just to get it right, fifty-thousand Latin King's. Largest street gang, Latin street gang in America" Vlad pressed.

"There's a story to all that. You look at the harsh punishments if you called Lord Gino or King Blood, but Sammy the Bull gets a deal. If you black or brown in America they bury you, to show you who you *fuckin'* with. We got numbers because they got numbers," Tone said.

"What about the structure? When I was talking to Tray Deee he said the black gangs don't have much more than a shot caller or two but nothing like the Mexican gangs," Vlad said.

"We just took the structure like our enemies. Duplicated it. We decided to govern ourselves. We got morals, we ain't *gonna* do this, we should have the right to speak our mind; so on. It's like the Hell's Angels or whatever, yeah?

"So when you have a picture in your mind, when we say, Black Panthers, it gives you a picture of power. That picture manifests in the mind, man. It -the picture itself- is power. So when you build structures there a vision in your people's mind that they know they ain't *gotta* take it. We had locations where we could sit, there's Latin Kings here. You're not *gonna* come in here with your little batons and little badges and beat the fuck out us and that we ain't *gonna* take it. We *gon'* fight back.

"You ain't *gonna* put us on twenty-three and one. Imagine like now with all them indictments our elders went through - like the Young Lords went through with COINTELPRO-

imagine if they left us a road map. That's what structures do, they build from generations to generations. Well America don't have that. Latin Kings do.

"I was taught and *wanna* teach. That's a healthy community, just like they got the Boy Scouts they grow up out of and grow up out of college, I was saying you can grow up out of the Kings and build. I didn't want the Kings to be a criminal organization, I wanted them to be a movement.

"But you can't teach me when I'm hungry, when I'm oppressed, when I'm high, when I'm lost; when I'm in the gang.

"Oppression leads to aggression, and that leads to violence. The adults failed. You -I tell *'em* - you were born somebody, naked. Without no Jordan's on your feet. Your mother loved you like you were the stars in the sky."

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

The crew were assembled around the railroad tie, the place where the mizzen had been was splintered and still burred and only now had a six by six post in the hole and all at once the *swart* crew moved away like clouds that dissipate in the morn.

The *Kalenjin* came to the mate and his scars caught light in ways that the thin and long muscles did not; he was shadow here and relief there, he had edges for seconds as he strode and had interior depth as he moved within Zeno's paradox.

"Secure," *Roosto* -the Kenyan-city educated but bush-born runner- said in an English taught to him by the Chinese in Africa two decades ago when he was just a boy.

*Lyngvi* nodded and placed his hand on the man's brailed shoulder. The whip scars on the *Kalenjin* ran from sciatic to clavicle like a Shepard's hook in threes on each side. It was



done by his own people; for his own good. And he was strong and had never flinched one time back then or since they picked up at the Horn.

His *attaché* motioned to the *Bushido* to move to taffrail and stay. They placed left hand on pommel and right hand on that. Their crocodile armor reflected like sea-caps and made them seem like they vibrated in entanglement with *ronin* Japanese galaxies far away. The sea rose and lowered the ship as it hit 18-knots in the gulf stream 200-meters across. The sails dropped as the *Albanians* pulled on the bowlines like giftwrapped rolls of canvas with *Idromenos* and *Yoshidas* and blonde and brown drawings of *Descartes* .

The Bust stood on the quarterdeck -her belly distended again- and watched the men move like ants in a segmented line, the sea like crumpled paper, the ship like caged hand of puppet working for Satan.

"Pile on more sail Mr. McMurphy," *Lyngvi* said as the quartermaster had his *M ā ori* run up the mast. *Lyngvi* watched the horizon empurple and the spray come over the bowsprit as he spoke softly to his *attaché* telling him to gather up two fathoms of oiled rope.

The man dropped his chin and the shoulders made a dip as the ship too followed the curve of a wave; and *Lyngvi* pretended not to notice as he looked up and away. "To the quartermaster," *Lyngvi* said to his *Kalenjin* as the man ran backwards along the black deck to relieve the quartermaster of his command of the islanders in the riggings now. They spoke a few words and the man felt for his *cat-o-nine-tails* with his right hand and then his beard with the left. His eyes met *Lyngvi's* across the nine meters of deck and both men blinked three times like the wide wings of bugs or birds with the whole universe in between.

Both men thought of their conversation after the quail and yellowtail had been pushed away from the table and the pewter plates had been removed by the cook and his boy. Pipes were lit, maduros with a retrograde roll came out, the air became opaque with white smoke and silence; *Lyngvi* had just stared at these un-mothered scions certain to flee from the King to unknown shores if they ever could.

But he knew they were trapped by all manner of things unable to be explained.

“Jack, this is madness, and you know it. This is me since yesterday, look here,” the quartermaster said as he leaned back and let his leather shirt lay open on his tanned chest and blued tattoos of swallows and stars.

“If it be madness then it’s heaven’s sense,” *Lyngvi* said with no rebuke of this large mate for using his Christian name. He placed his hand on the old Scot’s knee and held his *robusto* in his other paw. The Captain spoke in the echoes of the bulkheads and the first mate clipped a few words meant as assent.

*Lyngvi* and the quartermaster kept at it.

“She’s strange about the heart, her eyes go dead as the smile wakes up. She plots in her head between first bell and our sup,” he said as he dropped the pipe and bent the head and the smoke made seraph and caliph from navel to over his skull.

“She’s going to keep birthing them whether on land or sea McMurp; and I feel pollen on my lips and wax on these hands,” *Lyngvi* said as he bit down on the torpedo cigar and held the palms -splotchy red and white like a Templar flag- up and level with his own chest. *Grimnir* just stared at him.

“She don’t listen to no one, she speaks only to herself,” McMurphy said and bit too on his ivory pipe. He saw her

belly and her hands in his mind, but he cut his sentences short and blew out smoke as if they were additional words.

“So her eyes will see red then, her ears will hear the lash,” Lyngvi said as his *nanobots* flickered as their source of power borrowed from the *mtDNA* shorted again and was repaired in measurable time; his face shook like the canvas that was billowed & distended by wind.

Their reverie of that conversation began and ended together between each of those three blinks. And the crew watched as McMurphy walked to the D-rings on the square post and slipped the rope through each hole as if lacing a boot to go to war with a friend of a friend of a friend. He refused to look at her.

While the *Wolves* couldn't be killed -due to the *Medea* gene-these foreign nationals could. And so, with the Captain in his berth and the first mate squared away, *Lyngvi* had agreed to kill three men for allowing their ship to be done-in by the gang of *skins* out of New York the day before last. The first, a young Scotsman who had always been on *Lyngvi's* nerves was cut at the throat and dumped overboard. The second - the *Norwegian* - was in the noose out over the waves with all the blood draining from his face.

Three crewmen had hoisted the man to the *yardarm* and he could not breath; his blood had tried to oxygenate from the coder he had had before the EMP, but it failed as *Lyngvi* interrupted its battery. The punishment had begun. The man squirmed and evacuated and turned red about the forehead and jaw. His eyes bugged out and a thin line of urine ran from his heel to the deck as the *Kalenjin* swung the boom out over the sea before threading a clevis pin and talking to the Irishman at the helm.

Next would be the post.

The Bust stared at the six-by-six and saw Jack Four walk to it the same height as her Blax and the same width as him when he carried her; the same hairline at all but the prow, the widow's peak gone from Blax was still there on *Lyngvi* like a bowsprit, and his face callow as if washed by the waves.

She saw Blax carried away. But she didn't see what was coming next at all.

## 35. He May Conceal a King in His Hand

Apathy, the main symptom of the second phase, was a necessary mechanism of self-defense

Man's Search for Meaning [Frankl, Victor]

Modernity has replaced ethics with legalese; and the law can be gamed with a good lawyer. These people will be named by name, poets and painter are free, *liberi poetae et pictores*, and there are moral imperatives that come with such freedom. First ethical rule: *If you see a fraud and do not say fraud, you are a fraud*

Antifragile; things that gain from disorder [Taleb, Nassim]

People demonstrate their sense of place when they apply their moral and aesthetic discernment to sites and locations. Other than the all important eye, the world is known through senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch. These senses, unlike the visual, require close contact and long association with the environment

Topophilia [Tuan, Yi-Fu]

### **I. 2037 e.v.**

"The Hell's Angels had an ethos of total retaliation," he said. He poured a drink.

He then asked, "you ever read Victor Frankl?"

"No," Jack One said. His PGC -at one second past 2228hrs- ran a line from the *synaxaria* of the Eastern Orthodox prayers; his mind saw letters only not words; like blinking caused mere staccato of breaks in light upon the eyes; like code:

*Eden's locked gates the Thief has opened wide, by putting in the key: Remember me.*

He blinked and thought of other things as Blax spoke to him. Moths snapped in front of the stars up high and the *agogic* fire below. The peat of the *Laphroig* held just below the noses and above the glasses of each man.

“Well, he’s a few chapters into his narrative and he mentions two things a few pages apart that for whatever reason fuse -*kinda* lace- together in my mind. And I can’t say if it is reasonable or fair or even worth saying aloud, but this is what I thought,” Blax said and took a breath from the air above the square glass and then a slug of whisky as he closed the eyes. The fire felt warm on one side of face, the left foot -booted and wide apart- rest against the London glass half full of that Scottish whisky and half jammed with Colorado air.

“First, he mentions that those who escape the camps, the survivors, have a very hard time of it after the war.

“Many commit suicide and most -if not all- feel terrible about their behavior while in the camp, and they say that this is something that most people just will not accept. It’s a thing where the person who never was in the camp will not listen to the man who was in the camp, because, the man who was in the camp keeps saying things that make the man who never was in the camp feel strange and uncomfortable.

“This is mankind, he does not -almost ninety-nine percent of men- do not want to hear the truth of what went on in that situation, and it seems to me to be linked back to the other thing Frankl mentioned: how desperate they all were to live. That survival, he said of it, he called it the quote, *constant necessity of concentrating on staying alive*,” Blax said and took another deep pull from the flat and straight edge of hard glass and conforming amber.

He swallowed and felt no shudder.

“He mentioned the dream life next, but I want to ruminate on this paradox first. He says they concentrated on staying alive, and that it was this that made them have quote, *primitive inner lives* . I’m paraphrasing that one, but the point is that they knew they had reached some inner

bottom, where the need for focus on mere survival reduced them to some core, and that core was obviously real, it was the most real part of them, as all the apparent surfaces had been melted away if I can borrow some Blake to describe it.

“Anyway, some survived the camps, their vigilance in this regard works, in tandem with luck of course, and they manage to grasp what all had reached for. And when they have it, when they live and escape the *lager*, that is Primo Levi’s word for it, when they escape the death camps, they are not at all happy, not at all satisfied, not at all certain that they had focused on the right things at all.

“And, in the end what they all seem to say is that the only thing good to come from their survival is the ability they were afforded to tell others of this Hell they had escaped. That is it. All else is vanity and stupidity and disgusting nothingness.

“They all -to a man- felt that life was no longer worth living once they had reached the other side, it was in fact only the monomaniacal reaching that was meaningful, while in the camps. Searching, reaching for survival, was key, but not the thing itself. For after they had survived they merely -in their estimation- they had just reached another level of Hell.

“And many retreated into self-flagellation or suicide,” he said as he took a gulp and watched the fire for a second.

“They tortured themselves with guilt and recriminations for their selfish and evil behavior all done in the name of survival, or they ended it all with self-annihilation. That should say something even worse than the surface horrors of what people ignore. It says that the lust for mere survival that we all have is not a value that should be placed on top. It says there are fates worse than death, and they are -these fates are- things we choose everyday. We ignore honor and duty and friendship and loyalty and dignity all for survival each day, but, we are never faced with the horrors of these

decisions because our world -our time on earth- is so much less extreme than the Nazi camps.

“But, and we know this, we know when the people who escape tell us what they did to survive, the way they stole from fellow prisoners, cheated and lied and genuflected to unworthy capos or Nazi officials, ingratiating themselves and sucking up to the powerful and scheming to scramble to the top of some pile of bodies, pressing one’s fellow Jew or fellow man down to be crushed by the machine you barely survive yourself, when these tales are told we know that we do the exact same things under even less extreme and austere and primitive conditions. That is why we won’t listen, because we know we’re even less principled, even less ambivalent, even less aware of how little we care for our fellow man.

“We know that we sell out our own brother for less, merely to avoid the hassle of his one request in forty years, how we sell out our husband -like my sister-in-law does- and makes sure he never lives his dream, so that she may never be poor. She sees money as superior to her own husband’s inner life, his own soul. This’s all of us and we know it, and the more we deny it -the angrier we get at this assertion- the more true it is.

“The decent and noble are dead,” he said and picked up the bottle so that he may tilt its contents into his glass. He uncorked it and poured it and watched the copper sea in the cylinder with no ship just sloshing until he stopped pouring his drink.

“And these decent were dead,” he said as he placed the bottle at his flank, “in the camps early because they had honor and nobility and the wisdom to know that death was not worse than losing one’s soul. The truly wise never made it out to tell their tales of the camps. And the one’s who did survive -and offered their wisdom- knew they were frauds,



they said it. And they killed themselves under the weight of this fact.

“They knew that the Jews and gypsies they saw die were the real heroes, the one’s with real depth and soul and wisdom. These -the dead- they need not make it to the other side of the camp to know what would be lost in a fight such as that.

“And I say this with complete solidarity with Frankl and Levi and others who survived and told their tales, I do not condemn them any more harshly than they condemn themselves. That must be clear.

“I’m saying that man, by design, is no good. He is shallow and designed to survive at the cost to his soul and it takes something more, something approaching divinity to be willing to die before dishonor. And this trait exists but it is like the first light to go out, and all man remembers is when the last candle goes out, not the first. But I think of those that went first, the truly noble who said, *no fucking way* to the Nazis, *no way*. The ones who said, *you can kill me, and all my people, but I will not kiss your ass*.

“That’s the Jew I wanna meet. That’s the man I want on my side. And those men are forgotten, they are undifferentiated masses in the mind of history while the cowards and craven and solipsistic and demonic who lived get a singular place in our minds and souls. We remember the Levis and Frankls as men, as individuals, when it’s they that should be unremembered so that the noble ones who died early and often be exhumed, named, given identities.

“I see the same happening here,” he said and didn’t mean there at *Lot 45* . He meant everywhere else. He stared at the sky but it was hazy.

“Real men, the men who refuses to sell out for money or status or stupid conformity, die, are imprisoned, are forgotten. And the cowardly among us get elevated as

rebels when they are no such thing. Look at how billionaires scrape and kneel and beg for forgiveness and weep and humiliate themselves when the public turns on them. How many men who have *fuck you* money, yet lack the vocabulary to say *fuck you* ? I can name on one hand the men who have enough money to survive a thousand more years who also standing up for what is right in the face of public opinion.

“And the irony is the working class have the most power, the most.

“We have no money but that just means we have less to lose, and thus are the most free. But, we don’t use it, we still hedge and hold our tongues and worry about offending and alienating and being unliked. It’s only the worst, the psychopaths who don’t care, and they still pretend to care, by pretending to be charming and sociable.

“No, it’s one in a million who has feelings, and feels the pain of exile, but does it anyway.

“It’s one in a million who says, *I don’t like being hated, but it beats doing evil shit I hate just to be liked . If I must choose between being liked and doing what’s right, then I choose the right thing.* Everyone thinks that’s them, but it ain’t. Not one man in one-million has that trait; those ingredients, and that recipe in their balls.

“And I only have it half the time, maybe even less. I’m as weak and cowardly as the rest. It’s an incessant struggle to stand against the waves of society, to stand up against all their evil and stupid and banal bullshit.

“And every man breaks down, and submits eventually, or he dies from their blows. He dies from the machine’s retribution for his character. He wears down or he dies, those are his choices. And all I can say is that Frankl’s account haunts me, because I know that if I do sell out, and

I do survive, I know I will be horrified to see what is on the other side. I know that the reward for survival is Hell.

"And I lecture myself with this wisdom and I hope I heed it: *there are fates worse than death* . Man's soul is more important than his body. And man must live that way or he will pay the price. Only the stupid think they can get away with being selfish and shallow and cowardly and not pay a price much harsher than the death that comes from standing up to evil," Blax said and let his lungs fill and expel heavily as if to clear any feral words that had hitchhiked into his lungs. He purged and the fire rose a little in the fireplace and the wind here at elevation picked up and absorbed his numina.

"Do you think this society is evil, truly evil?" Jack One asked.

"I do. And I know it's not as evil as Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia; I know it's not that. I feel embarrassed to even compare them; as obviously the West is superior to those regimes. I'm not like the fatuous and ungrateful Leftists who think they are oppressed. I'm arguing something more subtle. And its this: each man has his own way to calibrate what he will and will not tolerate.

"And everyone focuses on the society that has reached its nadir, its bottom in the gory and grim camps. But, what about all the little lies, the little corruptions, the little winks and nods to the unjust that went on in the years that led to the smoke rising from the stacks of the crematoriums? What about those little and seemingly innocuous things?

"Isn't that what the Left says, that we are marching toward Nazi Germany?" Jack Four asked.

"They say it, but they are the one's marching us there. They are the ones subsuming the individual under the rubric of race and gender and social status; they are the ones smashing each of us together under the headings of groups.

It's the Left that are the fascists, it's they that are the threat to the individual. Look how they collectively assign status, it's *white-people* this and *black folks* that, it's *trans-community* -community, imagine that- a community that is supposed to all think and feel and act as one. The Left are the one's who have dispensed with the individual, and it's the Right -some parts of it anyway- who are standing up for each man, each person, as an individual.

"But the Left wants collective punishment for whites, and for men, and for straights. Collective status is totalitarian, and it is the Left pushing that agenda. I am saying that if we allow it, if we allow the Left to insinuate their fascist ideology into the body politic then the death camps are inevitable and close.

"And sure, then we can all scramble to the top of the pile of bodies and a few of us will survive to tell our tales of woe. But, what about now, right now, when we still have power, when we haven't been disarmed of our weapons or our minds? Now is the time to fight this shit, and show we care more about what is right than our fucking reputations or our jobs or our money," he said.

"The drive for homeostasis is strong," Jack One said.

"It is, and that is why it is even more important that it be overcome," Blax said and sipped his *Glenlivet*, "and I'll go one further. The Hell's Angels had an ethic of Total Retaliation, a disproportionate response to any infraction against them. And this is where groups are needed and useful; essential.

"When a man is an individual to his enemy, he can afford to fight as that individual, but when the enemy lumps that individual into a group, then the man -the lone man- he better look around at whoever else is in this so-called group. And he better form a line with those other men and stand as one thing until the enemy is defeated. Then, a man can go

back to being an individual. But, this cannot be pushed too far, beyond its natural, or organic boundaries. The Indians, the American Indian Movement, felt no solidarity with the blacks, at all. When talking to Hunter Thompson, the AIM guys, they -like all groups on the planet- said they didn't want *nothin'* to do with blacks.

"They are unwelcome in all other clans.

"I personally cannot stand most white folks, most men, most heterosexuals, and certainly most conservatives. But, it's a natural alignment for now. It is. And so I stand shoulder to shoulder with them. But I feel a natural disgust for them all. However, most people find comfort in their own kind.

"This is just a fact of nature and no amount of wish-fantasy can cure it. So, we have a natural affinity, a valence toward other folks of our general race, and creed. It requires no stress or strain to link up with white men, whereas to stand in solidarity with blacks requires huge expenditures of energy and suspension of mistrust and they feel the same about you and they almost always betray you in the end, and if they don't then you will betray them," he said with a contemptuous snort.

"So, while I admit that some blacks can be decent people, it's too risky to separate the wheat from the chaff. We don't have the metabolic reserves to sort that shit in a time of war.

"Races, and religions and cultures are natural boundaries like rivers and mountains and the edge of a forest; and they can be overcome, you know if you're Hannibal in the *Carpathians* , or Alexander at the *Indus* , Caesar at the *Rhine* , you can do it. But who among us can overcome the barriers of race? One in a billion? But, why should anyone even try when the enemy is out there hunting everyone down? It's just universal war all the goddamn time. It's like, why bother crossing the mountains or rivers when your

enemy is right in your face? In some abstract way can we befriend other races or religions or peoples? Yes, but in the real world, we have no such luxury.

“People pretend we have choices, agency, that they can choose to not be racist. Shit, all that is for the salon.

“Because as soon as things get rough, that will be the first thing to go. One side or the other will gang up and exclude the other race. It’s why prison is all race based, because prison is war. It’s a metaphor for war, for ancient ways, feudal times. People ought to see that one smart and decent and liberal guy in prison ain’t *gonna* change the culture or the pressures or the reality that people are trapped fighting for limited resources in a hostile environment with grudges going back generations.

“We are fighting for the individual, and frankly, very few blacks or Muslims or Russians or Chinese even believe in the individual at all. Think of the way blacks place so much emphasis on their cousins. *Dugin* -the shamanic advisor to Putin- explicitly said his people were against the individual and the freewill of the West. He says the East -the Russian-mindset is one of religion, tradition, instinct; what *Heidegger* called *Dasein* , a kind of living in the moment but not as the western version of the *paccekabuddha* but like a drone in an enlightened hive. An enlightened fascism, *sorta* . They all think of themselves as a member of a group as essential to their being. And that shit is powerful. And it’s more natural than our odd obsession with the individual. People don’t even understand how strange it is for a eusocial species to have individualism when all other eusocial species live in hives.

“John McWhorter explained it quite well in his book,” Blax said as he drank and the Jacks had his book load onto their PGCs.

“He said that blacks always take the side of other blacks no matter how awful the behavior. They defended OJ when he murdered two whites; they danced in the streets. They cannot be trusted to be fair or objective. I saw it first hand when I had what I thought were black friends, back in my liberal days,” Blax said with a smirk.

“You were a liberal?” Jack Two asked incredulously.

“I can see it,” Jack One said with a grin as Jack Four smiled too and turned toward the fire.

“Yeah, I was, and as Jack points out,” he nodded to Jack One, “I still have some of it in me. It’s like a vestigial organ that doesn’t work but still takes up space.” They all laughed and drank and shook their heads.

“I have some sympathy for any man who is mistreated, I do. And that is why I can look at the history of America and see that we did fuck with the Iranians and Guatemalans in 1954 and the blacks of the civil rights movement while Hoover was in, shit *he was*,” he leaned on the word, “the FBI. I can read history of COINTELPRO and agree that the black and brown and poor of the third world were murdered, oppressed and maligned. I see it, unlike most conservatives who just deny it, and refuse to read or listen to the other side.

“See, I listen and I agree than they were mistreated. What makes me no longer a liberal, no longer a Leftist, is that I think those who were oppressed deserved it; because they were going to turn on us the first chance they got. It’s self-defense,” Blax said as Jack Four kept silent but thought of the strange stories he dreamed of. The way the *Māori* said that the white men that were on the land of *the long white cloud* when they arrived had said that they fled the *Eurasian* steppe, the *Indus* , because they had been overrun by black-headed hordes.

"*Che Guevara* advocated for nuclear war on us," Blax continued, "the Black Panthers bragged of raping white women. Eldridge Cleaver personally bragged about it as a way to get even with *whitey*. The Marxists will murder us all if they ever get power and the CIA -as evil and black hearted as they are- knew that, and they did dirty shit to prevent even dirtier shit from happening to the rest of us. That is why nobody wants me around, because I admit that the truth is this: all sides are right and wrong all at once. People are whack.

"The Right denies that anything bad was ever done to the poor or the oppressed, and the Left denies that western civilization has the right to defend itself. I say we do bad shit for the right reason, and until the Left stops threatening us with their identity politics and Marxist crap, we will continue to defend western culture by any means necessary. Period. Full stop." Blax said and they wrestled -each to a larger or lesser degree- with the idea of fusing his first half of speech, with this part.

*It was not a natural fit*, Jack Four thought, *as Blax had said death was not the worst of fates, but here he was defending doing awful shit merely to stay alive. Or keeping the west alive*, Jack amended, *anyway, willingness to sell out to merely keep the West breathing.*

Blax could feel their confusion. The oddness of his own ideas was revealed by the silence.

"And I know it seems contradictory, so let me explain. The Left is humiliating us right now, they are making it wrong and embarrassing to be white and male, and of broad shoulder. That is why we fight.

"It is not for mere survival. It is for dignity. But, if they ever take over and all hope is lost, then we will die to maintain our dignity. But now we must fight for dignity from a position of strength, which means, it is not undignified to extirpate



your enemy while you can. It is only undignified to submit to them, to kiss their ass, to capitulate. No. We fight, and the Jews should have fought harder. They lost their dignity by kissing Nazi ass to survive; by turning on each other to survive. They fought amongst themselves not against the enemy. That is what we will never do. Savvy?"

The moths landed on the container in the shadows of the square tubing and the fire popped and the logs settled a bit.

"I got that twenty minutes ago," Jack One said with a mocking tone. They all threw the remnants of the spirits in their glasses at him, drops of 18-year-old single malt landing on him in waves from each cardinal direction, as he smiled at their hazing of him for his arrogance. Jack three called him a, *dick* . They all could see what was both right and abrading in their own genome, in Jack One, he was the best and worst of them all. He was a know-it-all who was sometimes right; and who never seemed to know it when he was wrong.

"A country is a group, a natural one usually. The Japanese and most Asians get that, but the west is predicated on an *idea* , which means anyone can join. It makes us vulnerable to Trojan Horses, you know?" Jack Four said as he stood; and they all felt uneasy at the wisdom of that.

"True. Very true. Which is why sometimes we have to close ranks and purge. Think of a country as a body. A body is a natural bounded thing. We are really just a collection of billion -trillions- of cells, individual neurons, right? But, those individual genes and cells and neurons must work toward the benefit of the whole, or the whole dies.

"Now, some genes are selfish, all genes maybe, in that they just function to get themselves copied and passed on. But, in the interim, in the years between birth and reproduction, they manifest morphology. This is when they build and maintain the body, this is when they must serve a function

beyond that second of gene transfer. Sure, all that matters in some abstract way is the one sperm -constituted of part of the man's genome *via* the meiosis process- the one sperm reaches and fertilizes the egg. But, in real life, the genes must do all manner of shit to make that even possible.

"There's many a slip between the cup and the lip," Jack Three said as he rose to pour more scotch into his glass, then like the hand of an analog watch he moved from man to man re-filling their own glass.

"The genes must work together," Blax continued as he raised his hand to wave off a refill from Jack, "with other genes and make all kinds of complex tissue and organs and brains capable of ideas and ideals. If some cells are a problem, they are ordered to sacrifice themselves for the whole, this is *apoptosis* right," he asked as they all nodded, "and sometimes that cell ignores that call, that order to submit, and that is called *cancer* . The refusal to commit *seppuku* , apoptosis, is cancer; literally.

"And the body often takes care of the incipient, cancerous growth itself. But sometimes it spreads and kills the host. Now, a society is no different, it is made up of millions of individuals," Blax said as Jack chimed in.

"Billions in China," Jack Four said.

"Yup, and those individual cells, people, must work together, even though their own individual lives are just like each gene in the body: i.e., focused on self-propagation. Right? Each man is focused on his own shit, his own job and wife and kids, just like each gene in a human or animal body is ultimately focused on its own propagation.

"But, in both environs, that individual cell or man must work with others to keep the body or the tribe or nation healthy long enough that the individual itself can thrive. I mean,

genes that code for long life, and not just for a body that is able to get a woman pregnant, but -rather- code that body to be around long enough to care for that kid, and maybe long enough to care for that kid's kid -your grandchild- would be better than a gene focused purely on impregnating as many as possible by age sixteen and then dying. Theoretically anyway.

"I mean, technically both strategies can work, but, it seems to me that due to the long period of human development, because children take so long to get on their feet so-to-speak, that a strategy of longevity is more likely to pass on the genes that code for longevity. I'm saying those genes work sixty-percent of the time more than short term gene propagation strategies, let's say. Well, over time, that means ninety-nine-percent of mankind now has genes for survival to age eighty, and not a mere sixteen. Even though technically, a boy between fourteen and sixteen could get a hundred women pregnant before he dies of leukemia or self-destruction of one kind or another.

"I'm merely saying that even a slight advantage of long-term survival can -after thousands of years- produce a ninety-nine to one ratio of long-term bodies to short-term ones as the norm. But we know not all species are like this. A mosquito," Blax said, as one landed on his arm and he slapped it, "a mosquito lives a few days, and yet he impregnates a female and she has ten thousand offspring. Their strategy is short-term."

"Real short term for that one," Jack One said -nodding at Blax's arm- and they smiled as Blax rubbed his forefinger and thumb together to let the dead bug roll off him and into the night.

"But my point is that it isn't obvious that long lives are inherently good. Plenty of species have short-term

strategies, so these things must be analyzed,” Blax said as he drank in another gulp. He felt nothing; not even a buzz.

Jack Four thought of cicada, and how they live long - seventeen years- but only mate for a day. They spend ninety-nine-percent of their lives underground, waiting, ruminating, not interacting at all. Then all in one burst of reverie and congress, they mate and then die. *That was the strangest strategy of them all* , he thought. And then Jack thought -as he stared at Blax, backlit by the fire- that he saw some hybrid of that in his Lt.

“Well, societies are as fragile, and a short-term strategy of corruption and graft and getting what you need, right? Well, that strategy, the philosophy of the solipsist, the guy who takes and takes from his culture without ever giving anything back, is a strategy that can work for his genes, for him.

“But, it corrodes the overall health of the society itself, and eventually, his kids or grandkids are going to have to live in the society he has wrought with his selfish, psychopathic behavior. And this is not good for his genes over let’s say five hundred years. So even from a selfish POV, the man who undermines his culture is undermining himself. Just like the cancer gene who kills the host, the body it’s within, makes it harder for that very gene to propagate, which is why childhood cancer is rare and mostly cancer happens after fifty, once you’ve sired and raised the kids to maturity.

“So, a society filled with selfish and nihilist people who are robbing and raping and scamming, cheating the system and trying to tear it all down, are ignoring the body’s call for apoptosis. These people are tantamount to cancer. These are your criminals and conmen and corporate predators and selfish elites who undermine the national body, America or the west *writ large* , just to make a quick buck in league with China, for example.

“See, we are in a two-front war, on one hand we have the poor and *bourgeois* Leftists and black-asshole-matter, who are a tumor on the body of America, and they must be biopsied and removed, no doubt. But, we have a larger melanoma, spread to the lymph nodes, in a corporate class and political elite that is destroying not one organ, like a liver or prostate like the Leftists scum are. We have CEOs and Senators who are selling out the whole body, the entire corpus of the west, to China, which if left untreated will kill us in ten years.

“The Leftists are one thing, but the corporate and Hollywood and political elites are much, much more dangerous. They are basically -if the analogy holds- removing our entire immune system and dropping our guard, stripping ourselves naked, disarming and bending over to let another culture, another man, rape and murder us, because that man has paid out a huge amount of cash up front for this right.

“That is money the body, the man, the victim will never get to spend, but he is so myopic and greedy and selfish that he doesn’t care. It’s like the gene that doesn’t care it’s killing the host, as long as it gets to grow and grow and grow and aggrandize itself.

“Our entire political and cultural elites have decided that the body of America, the nation, is not a real thing. They have decided, like selfish genes, like cancerous cells, like psychopathic and homicidal maniacs that their short-term gains are more important than the long-term strategy of corporeal health.

“It’s one strategy, and it’s not all wrong. But, the body has a right to fight back. Just as the human or animal body has a right to command apoptosis to a cell that is getting too big for its britches, and a right to marshal its immune system to thwart a carcinoma cell, the body politic -the nation- has a

right to put down individuals who are killing the nation, either slowly or quickly.

“The CIA, the FBI, the local cop on the beat has a right to dispatch anti-social criminals and grifters who are undermining America to get personally wealthy at the expense of our overall health. But, the FBI itself is compromised, it is staffed with Leftists and Chinese spies and like an immune system that is a failure, it must be augmented with anti-biotics to help out.

“We are those anti-biotics,” he finally said; getting to the point they all had been waiting on.

“We are going to help a compromised immune system that cannot keep up with the bacteria that is overtaking the body. Now, our methods are odd, strange, unconventional. I admit.

“But, Isaiah has a plan, and if we do our jobs, we will save the Republic. And it will be a healthier, stronger, more robust body when this is all over. Just like the broken bone is stronger, and the immune systems gains from the pathogen it defeats, a dirty world makes for a stronger immune system, right? We will be stronger once we’ve purged all these psychopaths both from the lower classes and upper classes.

“This nation used to have CEOs loyal to it, the way Jack Ma is loyal to China today. This nation used to have a middle class that cared about normative values and stood up for the flag and sexual modesty and men having good blue-collar jobs. They knew that these were the foundations to healthy marriages and healthy marriages as essential to healthy kids and healthy kids as the *sine qua non* of a healthy culture; they saw the ouroboros asp in their dreams. They couldn’t articulate it, most people can barely write their name, but they could live it and feel it and the culture reinforced it with its mythos; its religion, its patriotism.

“Now so-called conservatives merely lament their country falling apart and do nothing to stop it. They refuse to stand up for America, as long as they -like my fatuous sister-in-law- are themselves not poor. They get theirs, and that is all they care about. Modern conservatives are all talk. All talk.

“And frankly, they are liberals at heart. They teach their kids the same shit as liberals do. They teach their kids to value things and money and status and selfish pursuits over the health of the nation and its ancient values. Parents accept daughters who have several boyfriends before marriage, or sons who never learn to be useful in any way. They allow their sons to be physically weak, timid, feminine.

“It’s a metaphor, you see? The intellect is like the individual, it is one part of the whole. One cannot ignore the body and only feed the brain, just as one cannot focus only on themselves and ignore their community or nation or people. The human body is a country! It must be tended to, nourished, strengthened just like the people, the *proletariat* must be treated justly and not just the head of the country, the brains -so-to-speak- of the elites who all get rich and let the body politic, the middle of the country rot.

“And there are cultures like the Chinese and Muslims and Russians who are loyal to the whole, and they will kick our asses. Why? Because they feed the body and the brain, they focus on the whole, and like a man who has developed his martial talents, his nutrition, his muscles, his immune system, his philosophy, his ability to think in metaphors, his strategy, his awareness of his environment, he is superior to the man -his rival- who has focused purely on his logical brain and making money.

“The guy with a broader development of body, mind and soul will crush the guy who is weak and skinny -or fat- and has never been in a fight in his life. The geek thinks all of life is money and being clever, solving problems like word

games; he thinks that is real life. And the real man can walk into his house and beat each of these geeks to death with one punch and walk away with all that they once had. That is real life. Ballistic violence can trump decades of being clever in one second.

"China is not just focused on money and short-term status. They are in what is called the a hundred-year marathon, and, what they call, *one belt, one road* . They are allowing us to take their money in the short-term, so they can steal our technology and Intellectual Property and use it to dominate us in the next decade or so. They are like the guy doing push-ups and weapons training in relative poverty versus the fat guy -the US- with paid body guards. And Russia," Blax said and just shook the head.

"Do you think your brother, his family I mean, is," Jack One asked, "is in any danger?"

"I do, I think his relationship to me is a problem; if and when the Chinese or that goddamn Governor of ours finds out who I am or who he is, and he is in no position to protect his family," he said, not completing the sentence.

"Hey Blax," Jack Three said with a grin that looked in danger of growing so large -so quickly- it may break his face.

"What?" Blax said roughly; hating any change of subject.

"I just got the dates downloaded from the Christie's internal database; they sent shipping notices to the pace on Imlay street."

"Oh, their storage facility, right, in Brooklyn," Blax said with less pique; and shook his head forgiving the interruption now.

"Dude, send me the *specs* of the building, and their security maintenance, no, belay that, send me their installer data. The portal should have it," Jack One said curtly.



"It does, I just *DMD* you it all," Jack Three said as he and Jack Two shook hands from their seats.

"Check on Coast Guard schedules for those dates; it is New York and a lot more law enforcement and military than *Bordeaux* or fucking Greece," Blax said with a dismissive laugh.

"Got it LT," Jack Three said. "Man the marbles were amazing, probably better than this objectively, but, you're never going to believe what they've got LT."

"Oh, yes, I will," he said as the nerves rose and the chest felt tight; his heartburn came on and the muscles at the right rib at bottom cramped.

*With Christies being London based it would gain an interest from the British too* , he thought. *The second shoe drop to the British museum's anger over the Marbles. It was perfect, and it would be too easy. The goddamn storage facility backed up right to the Buttermilk Channel, it had its own access two blocks to the sea channel and an Atlantic basin harbor to boot. He shook his head at how awful it all was, but, he thought, at least this one doesn't involve pure vandalism* . But as soon as he thought it, he knew that it would; somehow it would.

The storage unit would not just have the items upcoming the next auction, they would contain thousands of pieces of collectible art, some of the best art in private hands in the world. That red Christie's flag that flapped out front of Van Brunt street was like a cape to Isaiah's angriest bulls.

*These artifacts will touch down and be kept safe* , he thought, and he kept repeating that like a mother sings to her child as apotropaic, as communique to that which cannot yet discern language, to that pre-lingual moment of man that can feel the ancient waves of God's dark and ebullient song.

## II. 2029 e.v.

"I just don't *wanna* talk to them bombers," inmate 14067074 said.

Warden *Matevousian* nodded the head and told him that Judge Martin had more control than even he did as administrator of ADX.

"The BOP usually has command, but in your case Mr. Felipe," the Warden said, "the Judge has maintained control. And I'm not inclined to buck him over jurisdiction. I'm afraid you're in a position of having zero leverage. None. And so I offer you the opportunity to speak with Mr. Kaczynski and Mr. Nichols."

"What about *Guzman, El Chapo* , and," inmate 14067074 asked.

"The judge has disallowed it," the Warden said.

"Based on what?" the inmate's attorney -finally speaking up- asked.

The warden paused, because the answer needed *finesse* .

"Association with gangs," *Matevousian* said.

"Because they Mexican," inmate 14067074 said to his lawyer.

"Gangs break down along racial or ethnic lines I'm afraid. That's not the reason you can't talk to them, it's just a coincidence," the Warden said.

"Yeah, ok, Warden. But next year is my last on Martin's watch and that means I get visitors, and letters and," inmate 14067074 began to make a list.

"At BOP discretion, yes. Which I why I'm having this meeting with you now. In a hundred and forty-four days your restricted forty-five years are up and you will begin serving the last part of your life sentence."

"I'm sixty-eight years old, Warden," *Luis Felipe* said.

"Yes."

"You know, where I come from is Cuba, I was part of the *Marialitos*. Castro was smart, he unloaded us like a virus onto America," he said as his lawyer put his hand out as if to brake, caution, slow his client down.

"Naw, man. *Imma* have my say. By 1986 I had to flee Chicago because the cops were *beatin'* on us bad. Anyway, I shot my girl. But I didn't form the Latin Kings in New York until I had to deal with the Five Percent Nation, a *negrito* gang in NYC. Respect was the first last and center to the reason for it. The prisons of the island were no joke.

"We couldn't even use the phones or make it without *gettin'* killed or catching new charges for *fightin'* back. But when I formed the NYC Kings we had power that kept shit calm; less violent because people backed off of us. Charlie Rock was my hitter, and Chico my *primeira coroa*, and the lock-up doubled in population as *Giuliani* is *goin'* wild. And when the Muslims attacked us in yard-two we fought back and then the cops did exactly what Fidel did, they sent us all over New York, split us up. And like a bug we spread," he said as the Warden saw the eyes dark, the hair grey, the face brown like an old map.

*Matevousian* wrote down a few things on his yellow note pad.

"By eighty-nine I was back on the streets of New York and the gang had been trained in lock-up and released on the streets for three years before I got out; we had hundreds *rollin'* now. I stole a car right away and got busted back. But, I gained my people, by losing my street life. You ain't *gotta* die to be a hero, just be a good teacher. You guys think we want freedom because you want freedom. But you have

good lives on the outside; our lives ain't much better outside.

"So we focus on reputation, status gained our way. You all gain it by money and houses and cocktail parties or being elected or being a cop; rescuing kittens from a tree. But we gain it by being about it, which means jail is like a promotion, that promotion you always wanted. You think that's a front; it ain't. We believe it. The mainline is a boost up, lock-up is our corner office on the top floor.

"Mandela, Oscar, soldiers at Anderson, the Cuban Five -*La Red Avispa* - for espionage, heroes at home in Cuba, heads held high. They ain't got no shame. If you really love your people you'll die for them, and we see ourselves as soldiers not criminals. And our hearts swell, you can't dissuade that. You can't threaten us with jail, it's where all soldiers go; POWs. You can only threaten my people and I can lead by pen in the pen, you catch me?

"You people can't see it. I'm telling you a story you can't hear? Is that it? Not enough bounce, or too much rhythm for *y'all*?" *Filipe* asked with no raise in the voice. His lawyer was sweating and feeling this was too cocky and too detailed -too unrepentant- to convince the Warden to restore his client's privileges when Martin's order's expired next month.

"How come no blacks are allowed in the Latin Kings?" the Warden asked as he looked at the notes on his legal pad.

"My mom was a prostitute you know. I had no father; back in Cuba. And I'm part black. But when Castro shipped us, I had no idea the size of the waters. I felt like a prisoner of the sea on that boat; you don't even know if you'll survive the night. And when we arrived they shipped us to Chicago, I think the Miami Cubans organized that; they didn't like us. We were all *cons* and trash to them. Anyway, I worked at the track behind Arlington Park but the Latin Angels, they was

the Angels back then -Lord Gino was the Inca- he found me and helped me. Because Chicago was like every immigrant group around, it was chaos, the gangs organized it, not the cops. *Chicago é a origem dos gangues, vato* .

“People *wanna* say we cold blooded, but it ain’t like that. We had a code, a five-point crown: *Honor* was first, and *Love* was last, final,” *Filipe* explained as he felt his heart squeeze at the lungs; push on the eyes; close the throat. He read the other three tenets of the code in his mind, *obedience*, *sacrifice* and *righteousness* and knew that the bodies on him had got what they deserved by the code. Just like he got what the criminal code doled out, the men he had killed got what they deserved by the King’s code that they all had agreed to before they broke it.

“Not everyone inside the Kings lived by the code, and we got our versions of cops and jailers and wardens too,” he added. He thought of the numbers, the Latin Kings had over a hundred thousand members stationed in cities just waiting to slit throats, fire-bomb, and invade homes of Hyde Park, or the upper East Side.

“But why no blacks?” the Warden asked, he had to write a report on the racial and gang element of inmate 14067074.

“We had to keep it simple, no blacks, because our enemies were black. It ain’t personal. Just like no *gabachos* either, our enemies were white. We were caught in between America’s black and white world. It was just a way -like our clothes, the black and gold- to tell us apart. Like uniforms in war.”

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

The Jacks had decided to meet and so they hiked back to *Lot 45* . Blax met them at the perimeter, and as they came

up in a line, he knew -all at once- that he'd bring them to the house after all.

They shook hands and walked back to the house, as the Jacks felt grateful for it but didn't say a word. Blax pulled his *shemagh* up over his mouth as he walked, the cold air was fine on his skin, but it hurt to breathe it in.

When they arrived, Valance was cleaning out from under the concrete counter and making piles of things as the dogs sniffed each new thing for clues.

Blax grabbed a bottle of wine from the cooler and said, *excuse me*, quietly to her as she leaned away from the metal cooler door. He laid a hand on her back gently and she looked up and smiled at him. *He was a southern gentleman*, she thought, and felt her chest swell just a bit.

Jack One sat on the concrete pad that he had fallen on hundreds of times as they trained, and he thought he could now feel each one of those catastrophes all compressed into one giant collapse. Jack Two looked at Blax as he cut the capsule and ran the tool into the cork. He pulled four glasses from the back of the slab as the wine breathed just a bit. The sky was white, and snow was predicted. The wind blew in spurts here and there.

Jack Three sat on the fireplace ledge, under the lintel and Jack Two remained standing watching as the red poured into each clear glass from the black bottle.

Blax and Valance spoke quietly, and Jack could not understand them, but it was soft and short and he felt his heart build in pressure and his eyes blink faster than he had expected. The child made noises in the room, Jack heard, and she too looked up toward her babe as Blax looked at her.

Blax waited for her to look back at her work before he looked away from her; only then would he exit the kitchen

through the large garage door and into the *agoge* to hand glasses to each man. He claimed one for himself. They all said, *thanks* and nodded and sniffed the bouquet deeply, out of respect for the wine and the man. Wine was not to be treated indifferently -that much they had always known- when their LT poured it, it always had a reason, and one ought to ponder it like one did his words.

Jack One nodded to the Bust -as his locked on Blax- as if to ask the Lt if she knew what they were to speak on. Blax nodded and was surprised Jack had even suspected that it was an option to keep such a thing from his own kin. But he knew that Jack was merely trying to be respectful before speaking as plainly as he was about to do. It was not -by Jack- an indictment of Blax's honesty, but an admission to Jack One's own brashness, Blax finally surmised.

"I don't want to be maudlin or defeatist," Blax began, "but, we have to prepare ourselves for the eventuality that this may be it."

Valance moved things softly, and her own body seemed to go quiet as if she too wanted to hear this; or she didn't want to interrupt him with even careless noise.

"It's been twenty-nine days, so yeah, I can't imagine any eleventh-hour reprieve," Jack One said as the Jacks' heads bounded up and down and they began drinking from the glasses, watching the lees in the glass -from the 66-year-old Bordeaux- settle back at the end of the fingers purple and oily and thin. The clouds turned the air grey and closed out the horizon. It was cold, and the temperature had dropped ten degrees in the last thirty minutes. The barometer fell too.

"It's harder for me because of your youth, I think of you first. I'm an old man, so if it were not for Valance and the child, it wouldn't even sting at all," Blax said. "And so if I could find a way to save just you three I would. I've talked

with Isaiah a hundred times about this. And there is nothing even he can do; it's too endemic, the gene has fused with each cell now."

"Cryogenics? Has he talked about freezing us until he can figure it out?" Jack Three asked.

"Yeah, and he's refused to do it. And before you get pissed, he has his reasons. And I've offered him everything I can think of and he cannot be convinced to do it. He's intransigent on it."

"Well, what are we still listening to him for then?" Jack Two asked, wounded by this seeming betrayal. Jack One gulped his *Lafite* and handed back the glass to Blax as he refilled it. Jack had been prepared for him to just take the glass away.

"Because we all have a chance to die with honor here. We have a chance to go out any way we want. We know the hour and reason of our death, that is a gift of the gods. Most men do not get such a gift, and while I lament all that is left undone, I do not lament my life, and you ought not lament yours either. You have lived a thousand lives in twenty years. You would not ever have been born at all under natural conditions, without Isaiah, you never would have had twenty seconds much less two decades.

"Do not make the mistake of missing the point. Do not make the mistake that greedy and shallow men make by ignoring all they have merely to miss what they do not have. That is more than stupid, it's a crime.

"That wine you are drinking is a *château*, a vintage, that maybe ten thousand people in the world have had, and no one will have again. You are Kings, what matter it if you were Kings for twenty years instead of serfs for a hundred? This is the time of your life, now, here, now. You have lived larger than anyone in history, partaken in things even I did



not. I was not Mozart, Shakespeare, Seneca, I was merely their tutors.

"You are the geniuses, and look at what you created, and will leave behind.

Jack One sipped the '74 *Lafite* and nodded and agreed with the man. Jack Two saw this from Jack and felt his heart beat longer, slower, in elongated vowels now. A few flakes fell and rose with eddies, swirling more than committing to the ground.

"Roger wilco," Jack Three said as he breathed into his glass feeling the wet brick of orangish black stain that the old wine had left at the rim of the glass then upon his nose. He lowered the glass and took his index finger and lightly touched the one drop on the bridge of his nose, pulling it downward to the tip and set the glass on the hearth as he rose.

Jack One rose sympathetically and each Jack approached Blax with hands out and palm up. Blax laid his fist in the middle as they moved theirs under his like three sheets of paper to his one black rock of a hand.

They softly closed their fingers around it and it looked like a flower head with the organic phyllotaxis of their fingers like the hard collar wrapping in imbricate overlapping over his scarred hand, each livid scar-line down perpendicular to the closed bulb just as the hybrid of the tall, but short-lived Icelandic poppy -*P. nudicaule* - and the *Stylomecon heterophylla* with its empurpled navel and brick red edges grew in their own fields. His hand grew wet as the snow fell, and some flakes stuck to their arm hairs and clear water looked milky as it ran from Blax's knuckles into their palms; it looked as narcotic milked by the herder turned farmer forgiven by God with this perfect pain relieving sap.

The snow grew into many flakes, most light, not heavy with water in the high-altitude cold. It need only fall one thousand feet from cloud to their ridge. All light expanded as if from no source, as no shadow lay on anything now. It was a perfect white-grey and the sun and moon both blotted out by the intangible mist of the snow clouds.

“Don’t fall silent,” Jack Four said as he watched them from the lab. The *bots* made a screen from floor to ceiling, so large and at such resolution it seemed he could step into their world, step back into time, step and too place his hand over the rock, the hand, of Blax.

Isaiah placed one hand on his shoulder, as Jack Four continued to counsel his brothers from afar, unheard, in their final day in place but not time; he said, “witch, *volva* , I want to ask you, to know everything, Odin said, and this went on three times, and the witch finally said, after capitulating by telling him of who did the evil deed to avenge *Hodr* , who slayed *Baldr* , who the maidens who weep are, to take his leave. But this is not enough for the berserker. What is ever enough? Finally, she says he is *the old sacrifice* , *aldinn gautr* , and then he insults her and she says:

Ride home *O ð inn* , and be proud, more men will come back on a visit when Loki is free, slips from his bonds, and the fate of the gods comes, ripping everything apart.”

## 36. Unkindness of Ravens

This is all very stressful for the alpha male, his fecal samples are as high in cortisol as the lowest beta. The costs on him are high. The alpha male must be hyper vigilant and break up coalitions of rivals. He must be generous and empathetic and diffuse most violence between females and beta males. The good alpha does these things, but he must be willing to use violence when he is insulted. If he doesn't it will be perceived as weakness and his down fall will come soon. The only real benefit the alpha male has is access to females

Chimpanzee Politics [Waal, Franz de]

There is no gene for alpha males, Lyndon just makes all that shit up

Intercepted phone call 12.12.14 [Smith, Sarah M]

Maybe you can invent your own game

12 Rules for Life Tour [Peterson, Jordan B]

### **I. 2038 e.v.**

The smoke of the *Pedron Reservera* plumed and shifted toward the outer ring of the black through the half-shadow of the dim porch light at the edge of the home. Single lights attracted moths, the heat brought the bugs and made Jack breathe heavy.

He had a piece of paper in his hand with a quote from *Aleksander Dugin* :

*An important aspect of the Eurasian worldview is an absolutely denial of Western civilization. In the opinion of Eurasians, the West with its ideology of liberalism is an absolute evil.*

The Russian shared a birthday with Blax and Jack -this year- had given Blax a present of a book from the man. Blax had written out this quote for Jack and handed it back as a kind of receipt or proof that he'd read it. Jack had acted like it wasn't necessary, but he kept it and brought it out at times like this. He re-read it and re-folded it and put the quote

back into his pocket and smoothed the jacket down three times.

Jack turned his attention upon the words that flew and landed within his mind, and the constellations of conceits that appeared as man's natural tendency toward pattern recognition will often -and reliably- do. He then thought of the philosophy of Tesla and the three, six and nine.

"Vortex mathematics," he said under his breath as he remembered the cones of the forest that he buried sometimes. He thought of the trees he tied -cinched- down, the church and the Aspens like bones bent into ribs. He turned last summer's sunflowers in his hand -in his mind- and watched Starr laugh, and he too now smiled at the memory.

His father made him uncomfortable.

The old mirth made him sad, and he began to doubt that he ever had really seen the pinecones, the white Aspen tree-bones, the girl giggle in glee at all.

"We prefer conspiracy theory to no theory at all," Jack said louder -thinking he was- quoting Hitchens, but it was *Nietzsche* who had said this first. His father sat still, almost all black clad too, except the tenaciously white socks; he was unable to commit to the look 100%. He sat next to his son in silence. The smell of the cigar made him slightly disoriented; the look of his boy turning into a man shrank him, aged him, made him measure each word.

The boy made him nervous.

His eyes and hair seemed as black and magnetic as a pair of ravens, as dorsal and mean and sharkish as fish with no warmth about the gills; his teeth revealed a wolfish grin both clean and shiny with spit. And Jack spoke with charm, ease -ingratiating- as if he was going to sell timeshares or ask for his vote.

They shared much of the memories of his short and fast youth, he had been gone by fifteen, and now back at eighteen, and so much more a man than the old man thought possible in just thirty-six months. The old man thought of bluebirds from that morning; and the way the sundial had held water from the last rain.

"Wulf Zendik said -and I tend to agree- he said that man - each man- is most alone where he is most a genius," Jack Allbesh said not telling his father who Wulf was. "So, kinda by definition, the theory goes, if a man is truly a genius in some realm -and Wulf felt each man had at least one true genius inside him- if he is a genius, there he will be alone and unable to share it with anyone else. The natural loneliness of genius, he said, was man's Promethean fire, an artifact of the gods brought to one man in order that all mankind can benefit from these sparks.

"And yet the one man, the bringer of light, is doomed to suffer alone for it, and suffer anew each day," Jack said and turned the cigar to make sure it was burning well. The maduro leaf wrapper made his hand seem even whiter. The smoke felt like prophylactic to the mosquitos that flew on the edge of the porch. The moths hit the lamps and sounded like small rocks thrown at the house.

His father was quiet, he did not have much to say. He had rarely been comfortable sharing his own thoughts -they were impertinent, and had gotten him in trouble in life- and so in the absence of rejoinder Jack began to speak again.

"So, I'm being honest here, I think you guys will not respect me for getting married at eighteen to a girl as young as Starr," Jack said.

"Are you getting married?" the old man asked.

"Well, we are. Yes. But listen, my genius, my *talent* -I cannot keep using that word- my *talent*, is that I have begun to see

reality for what it is, thanks to thoughts crafted by my command of language. See, the more precise my language got the more clear my vision got. I saw things better, I didn't just explain them better," he said with an unhalved notion, an unhalting tongue and eyes that no longer blinked. The sky was purple -not black- as the vault shoved back at the city as it pushed its lumens up in a filthy yellow dome beneath the firmament empyreal.

"Stalin said that *quantity* has a *quality* all its own. And the first time I heard that I was at the *Van Gogh* museum two hours later, on mushrooms and inventorying it. Like it was my little shop, of my artwork, mine," Jack said. *The glass of the front*, he now recalled in images that he labeled in words, *the curtains of burgundy*, *the staff speaking her Majesty's* .

He thought of the Stuttgart museum next; how the Celts became oligarchs of the iron age, royalty, wealthy and unaligned. He thought of how history had borders, and that each group and each man lacked a proper introduction or transition; he thought that entire civilizations could just appear or disappear in the records and the oral tradition too.

He saw the *Hochdorf* prince, from a 530 a.e.v. burial; the ouroboros torcs around the neck; amber beads; over six feet tall in their bones; buried awaiting the bronze age coming in their wake. The bronze sheet was bronze riveted tighter with war scenes upon it. Jack saw that ancient man was proud of war, did not lament it. He bragged, saw it as a high art and aspiration; the sacrifice of war was how they proved their worth to the gods. The tomb of chariots was on casters, made of women figurines with wheels, inlaid with coral.

A massive cauldron held four-hundred liters of honey mead; nine drinking horns lay on the table.

Jack thought all this as the old man sat in silence. His son, his issue, was out of his control and it was like a bad idea, or a slip of the tongue, a thing a man wished he could take back. Jack's father thought of how his wife had demanded a baby, a child, and how he had agreed despite how he felt.

*They showed their wealth with feasts -like Blax- and sent it all to Vallhala,* Jack thought as he smoked his cigar and measured what he'd say next. He hated that he had contempt for his father; hated that this was the way it was. He was a man full of reverence with nothing to revere; a man of appetite with no food in sight.

*Gold and cloth around the prince,* Jack thought next as he assumed the ancients respected their elders. These inventory of tombs were evidence, *rider on horse too; bands around the bones. Broaches, with pins bent so they can't be removed and reused. Bronze dagger laidover with mercury and the metal noblest. Even golden shoes; graven amulets ,* Jack thought as the carvings were similar from region to region, epoch to epoch.

*Language is next. Wales, Skotland, Gaelic; Portugal. Herodotus, said they lived above the Danube and past the pillars of Hercules,* Jack thought in cascading words and images knotted like the insular art of the isle, the *Codex Cenannensis* , the vellum of the 640 pages in the *Book of Kells* .

He was still silent. He thought instead of speaking. He saw folios and *Dál Riata* ships carry the tomes off shore.

*Celts in Portugal at the same time as, well, before 990 a.e.v.,* Jack thought. *Bronze age sailors spoke Celtic; ores and ingots. Ah, 387 a.e.v, Celt versus Roman at battle of Allia ,* he thought still -awkwardly- silently in time enough to breathe. The old man followed suit. The air was disturbed by this respiration, as the moths landed on the home's side by

the lights and the crickets rubbed legs together like rosin and bow.

*The Greeks and Romans called the Keltoi barbarians; stripped them naked in bronze reproductions or marble statues; trellis of wildness in the grave of art, Jack recalled as he clockwise -then retrograde- inventoried the museums, and the Romans made their hair ramshackle, manacled them, gave them feral beards. The torc remained but they were untamed, and that was the same thing the British -who were Romans after all- would call the Scots: barbarians.*

“They laughed too much, they drank, boy were they drunks, even Aristotle said that of the Celts; that they stole, they’d rather raid than work, and they were poor and tribal; loyal to their own over getting business done, ” Jack quoted aloud mid thought, like a burst from a dream.

The old man said nothing at all.

*The tall ones , Jack kept thinking, the warlike -Galatae- was the word used by the Romans and the Greeks to insult these foreign slaves; and then a derivation - Gaels- was taken by the brutes after centuries in Rome; like nigga taken by blacks called nigger by the white man . Jack meandered through the grove of his thoughts, from plot to plot, climat to climat , comparing where white and black became one line, one square, one six-sided die spinning between thumb and finger of fore. He was shocked -as his coder loaded more and more information onto his mind as it wandered through history- he was surprised to see how his own people were treated the same way blacks were treated now. The same insults, the same stereotypes, the same reaction of intransigence too.*

They -each group- saw themselves as apart from America, a subculture that had no interest in assimilation or getting along. He began to wonder if there was a gene beneath the skin, that connected warriors, men of honor, men who had



no interest in business or glad-handing or settling for second place. He wondered if some men rejected the idea of the win-win, and wanted -needed- his rivals to lose.

"I don't follow," his father finally said and looked at him with eyes that squinted. His boy looked older by ten seasons of storms, taller by eleven inches, heavier by enough stones to fill a bucket the size of the red anthills that grew in the Texas heat and sun.

"I'm saying that if your heart is pure, you can transgress without breaking the law, or you can break the law without transgressing, I guess, I mean. I mean, if I'm an honest man, if I tell *you*, or that girl in Amsterdam -or Starr in there- the truth, then I'm absolved of all crimes. I am asserting that. Do you believe that?" Jack asked as he tried to recall that girl's words and her smell -like dough and tobacco, turmeric, lilies- her odor came back *in lieu* of her name.

Jack then thought that Plato had said, "*stelai of Heracles*" not *pillars*. He corrected his own inner error, but his dad spoke overtop of this and the thought fluttered away.

"I can't say for sure I know what you mean," the old man said and held still with legs crossed and hands in the lap.

"I mean if I confessed to a murder, would you judge me, condemn me, turn me in?" Jack asked. He stared out into the yard of the trees and the fence that bounded the other trees of the same type, he then spoke quickly, "you see how the Live Oaks have these big branches all cooked and wild?"

Jack's arm stretched out and seemed larger to the old man as it pointed at the brown tree -crooked and gnarled and large- under the moonlight and the diffused lumens of pollution of these houses all around.

"I do," his father said. They both realized that Jack was not genetically his, Jack knew it -the father now acknowledged it

to himself- and all it took was for them to look together at that Live Oaks.

"And look at the little branches, they are shaped the same way. And if you saw their root ball, you'd see the same thing. See, all of nature has a way, a *Tao* ; the Asians call it *Tao* . And man has a nature, and each man has his own nature. If he fights against it, he is a cat living the life of the dog, the Live Oak trying to be the Aspen, and it just doesn't work that way.

"There is an old saying in biology, nobody believes it except me and the guy who said it, but it's cool even if you don't buy it. Anyway, he says, *ontogeny recapitulates philology* . That just means that each individual organism -each animal in nature- repeats the stages of evolution during its own morphological formation or life cycle.

"So, it just means that evolution, *writ large* , goes, began," he corrected, "began as single cell, then multicell, then to jelly, then to full-fish, then hairy mammals, then primates and humans. Roughly speaking of course," Jack said. *From barbarian to civilized man* , he thought to himself.

"Of course," the old man felt odd for saying that. He didn't know it well enough to say, *of course* , but he just felt like agreeing with his boy. Each word felt like eulogy, and he didn't really know why. He too had instincts, he figured. And he didn't want to speak ill of the dead.

"So, each animal will go through this same basic series of stages up to their own birth. So, the fish begins as single cell, then blastocyst, then mature -born- fish. But the human goes through all stages, we are even fish at some point, in utero. Then we have a coat of fur, like a beast, we even have tails, did you know that? In the womb. Anyway, then we shed that and become human. And then we are born.

“Anyway, the point is these stages of development are recapitulations of the same vector of development of evolution of life on the planet.

“Patterns repeat all the time. And this matters if you want to understand anything. And yes, somethings are *sui-generis* and novel and new. Some phenomena developed *sua sponte* . But, even that, even there, I suspect have corollaries but those corollaries will be few and far between as well; and hard to notice at each level.

“But even the universe began as a singularity, as single proton and anti-proton. And this single event, it was a one-off, or at least it is rare inside this universe, we think. It happened once. But there are corollaries at each level. The formation of stars; or the creation of life; or consciousness in man; self-aware man.

“All of it was rare and seemingly without precedent or causation. I don’t want to fixate on this, but my point is strange shit -and seemingly unexplainable shit- happens all the time and by the time there is anyone around to even notice, it’s all fairly commonplace, and taken for granted.

“Humans go about their day as if it’s no big deal that the cosmos even exists, that inflation happened, and is accelerating, and that life began from mere chemical substrates and that consciousness itself emerged maybe ten, fifty to a hundred-thousand years ago.

“Most people right now are thinking about what they want to eat. Most people behave like animals, as if reality is of no need of explanation or awe at its weird grandeur. And instead, you know, instead people think the using up of time and energy discussing the weather or some banal TV show is somehow worth the investment. They act as if we will never die, and that being alive itself is no big deal; but just something to get through to preserve for its own sake;

independent of what it might mean to be alive on this planet in this expanse.

"As if we have all the time in the world," Jack said and chewed on the cigar.

"Truly pondering this shit is not interesting to ninety-nine percent of mankind. The best you can expect is a short and *clich é d* sentence or two of kinda boring truisms on the vagaries of fate or some skin-deep bromide about how weird life is and then it's back to bar-be-que and ballgames and taxes and *happy wife happy life* nonsense.

"I don't say this as if I am not exactly like this at times. Shit, I watched the Super Bowl this year, and I loved it. It was awesome, ok?" Jack said ecumenically and placed his hand on the old man's shoulder.

"I'm talking about the mass of men who truly don't find life that interesting. They find sports or sex or food or money fascinating, but they don't care about the strangeness, the beauty, the terror of lie. They accept it at face value. The same way you accept the dream each night at face value and never question its weirdness while inside the dream. Only upon waking up is it odd to you. Most men just accept life as is; no questions asked. They see that it's smart to look out for themselves, smart to play by the rules. They see that it's smart to hold thy tongue, smart to go along with the herd. Because preservation of the body, not the soul, is their only goal.

"And I do not," Jack said as the old man kept still. Jack thought of the rules of Lot 45, the code as laid out by Blax. And he saw the way his brothers believed in their clones, their structure, their way of life. He saw how weird it was compared to the norm, compared to America, and how his own philosophy was one level up from both America and the Jacks. He saw the rebellion beyond rebellion, and how the true genius would not be understood by either side.

"I have awoken -and like the man awoken from his dream- I see that the dream itself was not as it appeared while inside it. Only, I've actually awoken inside the dream, daddio. I've awoken inside the dream and see all this -all of it- as unreal, as weird, and I can do anything I want. People bleat on and on about how nobody owes you *nothin'*. And they say to stop whining and stop expecting anyone to give you a thing. But, if you actually take them seriously, and do whatever you want, then these same people whine and cry that you ought not have murdered their wife nor cut the heads of their children off in the night. All-of-a-sudden they admit -ringed by heads on twelve pikes- that they had expected you to -that you owed them- the courtesy of not making a meal of their backstrap and tenderloin, and not taking a drink of their blood for your wine.

"What I want to do is live my life with honor. And total autonomy, too; you know? Live within the context of love, of true love. I don't want to live for money or some job I hate, or for someone else's idea of right and wrong, but my idea on right and wrong.

"I *wanna* push it past what is even weird for the weirdos, I wanna blow everyone's mind," Jack said and brushed the ash from his thigh and used his tongue to clear the bottom teeth of small shards of food from the meal his mother had prepared that day. He pulled from the cigar and let the nicotine rise in his blood.

His father used his thumbnail to press against his own teeth; his father stared straight ahead.

"I find this dream world to be a place of awe. My talent is - and the place I'm most alone, most lonely- is up on this mountain top of awe. I feel an awe when I ponder who and what I am and what the earth is and what I am *vis-à-vis* that earth and cosmos that birthed it all. I see the *grandeur* of the leopard, the lion, the lamprey, and I see myself -with no

scepter but staff in my hand- as part of that bestiary too. I see the *grandeur* in man, and in me and in that little girl in there," Jacks said as he nodded -a *cabeceo* - in the direction of the house and toward his Starr.

He couldn't finish that thought; the eyes were too hot, the throat too closed.

"GK Chesterton said that the true conservative was a revolutionary," he paused again and drew air and hot smoke through the *robusto* . He watched it glow at the end and focused on the warmth in the mouth. His father looked down and closed the eyes. The moths alighted from the wall and snapped around the glow from the bulb.

"This was, when he uttered it -and is now- a controversial thing. Conservatism is ostensibly the opposite of revolutionary. But, that is only because most so-called conservatives are not conservatives at all. They have no desire for the old ways, they just want to preserve the current ways. They have no idea what ideas are best, what way is best, what *Tao* is best. They just stick to whatever they were raised in and try to slow down progress to a glacial pace so their timid little hearts can rest easy. Modern conservatives are just scared.

"That is not a conservative; that is a timid animal," he spoke so quickly from idea to idea -logic to logic- that the old man felt the mind roil above the spinning guts. *Any man who thought like this, spoke like this* -the old man thought- *was headed for doom* . It was a careening car, a top-heavy child heading headlong down the stairs in a rush. He thought of the stitches in the chin, the way the glass had broke and his wife had screamed and the way the doctor had washed his baby boy's head and his hair.

*His way -Jack's way- it taunted life; it dared death to a duel,* the father thought.

But it had an air to it of something three-dimensional, body-guard not mere barrister. It was music played not written, witticism not of the staircase but of the moment; the protection of apotropaic hidden under the clothes, the *spectre* wrapped in shawl of feather and down, the mead of poetry drunken down. The gut filled with duck and doe from the King's forest, daring the Knights to cut him open to prove what had been in the mouth before his denials and insistence on innocence and righteousness outside the walls of the bailey and motte.

Then there was a grin to a joke that nobody would get.

And Jack spoke and spoke as he sat on the porch as if he had an Ace up his sleeve; as if his quiver was filled with golden broadheads and fletching of the unkindness of ravens so much so that his weapons could fly each night to anywhere in the world.

It was an arrogance not of mind, nor language, but of instinct; not of intelligence but blessings by the gods. Governments sent out men to do dirt without any acknowledgment, why would not the gods send emissary as well? He felt the feathers of angels, the eyesight that bent over horizon, the talons retracted in the bones of his hands.

"He -Chesterton- said that to maintain the old white post, one must be always making a new white post. One cannot leave it alone, because life itself is destroying the old ways; the wind and rain and vermin and fowls will all batter and mar and sully that white post until it is bare and then in ruins.

"All true conservatives -he said- they must constantly be replacing, repainting, repairing, re-vivifying that post. I want man to stretch his boughs as weirdly as he wants, but they must grow over top of his natural roots.

“See, a tree’s boughs -its canopy- mimics its roots, so a tree with wide branches has wide roots, and some plants go narrow and deep and have the same types of branches and leaves: narrow and tall. You see?

“Man has a natural root structure, and that is based on his temperament, and that is largely genetically defined. He adapts to a culture most suited for his genome. And for a long time, man lived in a society that had found some wisdom, it had learned how best to survive and thrive, and have a good life. And this was defined via *meaning* . And meaning was achieved, not just as paint on the post, but as the lumber itself. Meaning was deeply integral to our lives. It mattered more than we understood; but we just lived it; somewhat unconsciously; unaware of this gift. We followed our dreams, and our myths, our stories of what was what and who was who.

“I’m not defending the status quo, I’m defending the idea that man used to know how to live; even though he had no idea that he knew. He couldn’t explain the *hypothalamus* or the orienting reflex, and how we need morals, values, and a hierarchy to even see, to be able to physically see, otherwise we’d be overwhelmed and in fact see nothing. Nobody ever knew that; but they did it.

“Did you know that if you block the *nucleus accumbens* with chemicals a man will have no idea what he sees as he watches you peel an orange or lift a cup to you mouth? The brain decides what you see, the eyes are taking it all in, and thus you cannot make heads or tails of any of it until the brain makes a choice, a choice based on ranking things in order of importance, thus on *values* of what is important, thus based upon a moral code of good and bad, right and wrong. Morality is foundational, it’s not something that religion makes up,” Jack said.



"I didn't know that," the old man was burning a lot of calories trying to keep up. But he got that morality was foundational due to some part of the brain. He wondered if the reason his boy made no sense to him -that he saw him like the orange peel, heard him like the slurp of the cup, but couldn't make heads or tails of his moral logic- was because of this *accumbens* thing too. But the old man was too nervous to ask, Jack often got angry when interrupted mid-stream.

The old man wondered about his own brain, and if he was losing a step.

"The reason I bring all this up is because it's not about rational thoughts. It ain't about math and science. It's heart and guts, daddio. That story is always told, I heard it, we've all heard it. Mr. Blax says that consummatory rewards in the brain are activated in a totally different region than the *thalamic* region that mediates meaning. He says that a brain that focuses on consumption -like the materialism doctrine focuses on- is non-fulfilling and leads to *ennui*, anomie, spiritual death. He says that a culture that focuses on the material -on objects instead of relationships and meaning- will descend into tyranny because nobody has a functioning brain anymore.

"Objects are like drugs, they slake the hedonic system, not the *thalamic* and thus they wear off and leave the man in the lurch desperate for more bullshit to buy.

"Modern men are all addicted to shallow pursuits and will do anything -like drug addicts- to get their shallow desires met, ignoring the meaningful or narrative side of the world. People call you insane or stupid for caring about loyalty and honor over this so-called freedom or money or longevity. They will say *be smart, it ain't worth it*, when you want to risk it all for a pal or for your honor. Our ancestors would call

them merchants -as an insult- and call them, *those that set up places in the city in which to lie to one another* .”

Jack saw the *Lacedaemons* combing their beards in the river. He saw the way the water rushed by; the way the birds landed on the banks and took a drink from the common stream.

“They -modern people- they ignore their right hemispheres, their *thalamic* system that responds to deep -meaningful- action that is not rewarding materially -you get no money or chicks from it- but is rewarding spiritually. If you do something important but it reduces your money or lifespan, they say you’re stupid, but if you do something that increases your honor or pride they say why bother at all? These people are all trapped in the left hemisphere of the world, like a planet in tidal lock, facing its star without dark.

“Modernity has killed the spirit by over-focusing on the material, the scientific, the rational, and allowed the *thalamic* -meaning-centered part of the brain- to atrophy and remain underfed. It’s like the weight lifter that over-focuses on the upper body and skips leg day.

“He looks like a fool; all top heavy with these skinny little legs. It’s actually dangerous, because he cannot support all that weight up top. The Author says it’s like a student with Aristotle all in his head but no dinner in his belly. Top heavy. He needs the lower body of religion, of myth, or heroic drama. And that comes from living your own life as if morality matters, not just money, not merely getting laid, not status or even making a million friends from other tribes. What matters is moral action, in doing what is right, even -especially- if that means breaking the law and making everyone hate you. Or losing your life.

“The law is corrupt and made by totalitarians and Satanists. I believe that. America has handed its soul over to Satanists and rationalists and passing laws to crush the soul of the

good. And the merely average -morally average- go along with it. They -like the Good Germans a hundred years ago- just go along with whatever the leader says.

“Well, I won’t do it. I have the God given right to rebel against all authority if that authority is corrupt. I have a right to live my life as one moral agent, one moral neuron, refusing to give in to the herd. And, who knows? maybe my example will spread. But, that is up to other men, they decide who to follow. They can follow the herd or the example of one man who has love and hate in equal proportions -large proportions- in his heart. A man that demands that each individual be treated as a child of God. I won’t let them tell me that good men must suffer, that evil men must prosper, that a nation must commit suicide. I won’t,” Jack said. He knew that he was in a phase change; he could feel his own night coming on.

Jack thought of what he’d read, that the first twelve tribes of Israel had banished ten from the levant; and that the remaining two tribes were the merchants; and where modern Jews came from today. Modern Jews came from those mere one-sixth of the first *Ashkenazi* tribes. He then thought of the way blacks spoke about Jews; how blacks made everyone uncomfortable with their acknowledgment of the Jews pernicious ways *vis-à-vis* the black community. He heard Farrakhan, and the conversations of the rank and file as they spoke of the Jews.

He thought of the ways many blacks rejected vaccines and science because it was a tool of the white man and the Jews.

He could feel that he had soft-pedaled his ideas to his dad; that he had told half the truth. Blax had warned him of this. He had said that for each truth a man told it was like solvent that revealed two more lies. The liar felt spotless, the honest man felt more and more the fraud.

He now knew what the man had meant. It made him want to blurt out more truth, but he saw the irony in that. He saw the hydra headed monster and each severed head a place for more to grow back.

The father had grown increasingly nervous and wanted to tell his boy to be careful, but knew that this would anger him. He didn't understand his boy, and his fervor, and why caution would be seen as insult. But he knew from their earlier conversations -before he had left for this school in the mountains with Mr. Blax- that the boy, his Jack, would take offense at being warned by his father. So, he remained quiet and thought of what to say next.

The boy sounded like a religious fanatic, and dangerous.

But the father didn't know what to say or do. But, the fervor, the willingness to throw one's own life away for a vague principle seemed insane to him. *Life is too short already*, he thought as he had saw the way his wife had held the baby boy in her arms taking his life more seriously than the boy himself did, *to throw it away for a principle, a principle that other people didn't even care about. Humans -as he said- were willing to put up with almost any kind of society at all, they didn't fight for it themselves, why should his boy be a martyr for it? They didn't deserve his example, his sacrifice. They didn't*, he repeated to himself, *deserve my boy*.

"What about your mother?" the father asked and instantly regretted it. He knew that the boy had no idea how much she had sacrificed -how she had felt- just to build him, gather him from scattered bits and dust and sand. He knew the boy would never understand the love a mother has for a child; and that the boy would use his life however he saw fit. The boy would see himself as self-created, a self-made man. The boy would never see how much others did just to bring him into the world.

“The artist brings forth his *oeuvre* and relinquishes it to the world. He created it, slaved over it, bled -nearly to death- for it. But, once he unfurls his hand and let’s go, it belongs now to the world,” Jack said and sat back in the chair on the porch and looked out over the city lights, the jam-packed neighborhood houses, the false calm and manic fear just below surface of each of these homes.

*They were going to be slaughtered* , Jack thought; he could feel it. A purge was coming, and the Texas heat felt like it laid upon him as physical, like blanket; like rolled rock of a tomb.

He thought of his brothers, and how he’d always live in their shadow if he built his tribe from the clones as was laid out by Blax and the corporation. If he took command -as King of his clones- he’d always be second best, *to Jack One in this domain, Jack Two in that, Jack Three over here or over there* , he thought. *The only way to be first, was for them to go* , he thought. And the only way for that to occur was for him to give up the mantle, the scepter of the King, and be what he was best at: the Knave, the Shaman, the last Jack.

He saw the uniformity in their -his brothers’- models, the valence and coherence and knew that for all their success, he could be the one -the only one- to beat them on this new field of play.

And this could be both smart in the modern sense, and yet serve the need for meaning as well. He could win, and live forever in wealth, but also be a permanent reminder of this middle -or fourth- way. He, he believed, had found the perfect strategy, the amphibious, the animal suited for land, water and air. He believed he could maintain his striving, not for life, but for meaning.

From there, he would be able to rule over everyone -he thought, as he saw the doublings of three, six and nine- and

from there -without being first- he would still be *second ne daigne* .

## II. 2038 e.v.

The wind didn't even rattle the panes or huge container doors; *or the Jacks rapt in dreams still, no doubt*, Blax thought.

But he noticed the knots on his weather download for the region; and his eyes saw the eddies of snow and black detritus sniffing around the edges of the perimeter of the buildings. It looked -in both cases- like *Kanagawa* waves rising and cresting around the shallows of the sea. The temperature outside was zero degrees, Fahrenheit. The night had seen to it that this cold would sink into the core of the trees and the panes would transfer it from one side to the next.

*The universe could have been a particle drop from the other side of some other universe; the falling away of one proton into the event horizon of some ancient black hole* . Inflation and punctuated equilibrium augmenting and halting the pangs of the neotonous expanse took up more and more of his own thoughts as he ruminated over what could be on the other side of our own incomprehensible universe.

He'd heard some physicist say once that consciousness was the way information felt when processed in some specific way. He placed his hand on the cold glass.

*My behavior is local*, he thought, he was a silent guerilla leader, *in a yet undeclared war, culture war, war of good and evil*. He was defending his turf, his land turf and his genomic turf, and he felt good about it, as if it mattered. *But, then, the mind -whenever it had an open window or crack in the wall- it got out and began thinking larger, beyond earth, beyond material existence, beyond survival,*

*and dominance and crushing the black hearts of my enemies; men like black ants with no souls.*

They were so small that it made him ask, *so why bother at all?*

It was like speculating not on the already ineffable thoughts of a woman one loves, but on the thoughts she didn't yet have. His mind was like the wind that moved among the trees and the forest close to home but always rushing violently upward toward the empty spots of the stratosphere, and banging against that vault door with black -endless black- beyond.

He was always, unaware, one might add, of both the etiolating and augmenting affect of the ruminations over the familiar but heavily wooded ground and conversely the barren and unpopulated terrain of the unexamined. He saw boundaries in the bleak, and formlessness amongst the clutter of the world.

He picked up artifacts in his office, memories from the mind. He held objects in three dimensions in the holograms of the coder, and built models of his past at one twenty-eighth scale.

He felt a rush, a picking up of speed when he pondered the truly unknowable; so little of that was left now in the bright regions, and there was more of it than ever before in the seemingly empty zones. *All knowledge decreased wisdom, he thought, and all gains in wisdom seized and immolated, decreased, what knowledge one had compared to what was to be known .*

*The terrestrial map, he knew, had been conquered before his birth in 1974 of this era vulgari, so thoroughly that people who had died before his placement on the board were lamenting its passing as an avenue for adventure .* Some men -cowards and the boring- upbraided men for

seeking adventure. He thought of Stan Goff, who chided *adventurism* as if it was ignoble; *denying the human spirit and body always, as the Left does*. The Left, he thought, *hates the human animal, hates his body, his impulses, his corporeal needs*.

*All is theory, all is abstraction, all is dead to them; rationalism forever like the cold, breathless death of inflationary space. The man matters not, only the society. The body matters not, only the philosophy that flagellates it, whips it, on the sides, on the eyes, and tells it not to live so that it merely may not die.*

*What had he to do with Jack, Jack Four? What was there to do? Was there anything?* Blax asked the glass, its reflection, the cold and the steam in the breath of small animals among the forest.

And if, yes, could Blax know the answer, an answer beyond a, yes?

What could stop him once he -Jack Four- had tied himself to revenge? Blax had foreclosed on his own revenge, and took up the cause for something larger, something grander, but if he was honest, which he was about to be, he would admit that he would still prefer the personal revenge to this larger one. Sure, he hated the people they fought.

He had enough hate in him to blank out the world. But it was tempered and sequestered and he could follow orders from Isaiah and do his job.

But, the men -and women- who had personally injured him were enemies close, so close he could see their shark-teeth, their crow's feet, their turkey-necks, their duck-ass hair do, their veins like roots, their skin like leather and stone, their words like animals in heat, in pain, in death throes. He could mimic their laughs, their bleating, sheepish laughs, their stupid words as rudimentary as if mere beasts could speak,



herd animals, not predators. *They were his, his* , he thought in the third person like this. *And a man must have some personal possessions. A man's personal enemies were just such things to have.*

He could taste their outgassing, their effluvium, their lies.

He could feel a grand release in their deaths at his own hand, bare hand, animal-man hand. That he had given that up, to teach these men, to build something grand instead of tear down something profane, had never found a way to settle at his soul's bottom, to fit inside his jangled guts, to harmonize in his ears that rang with tinnitus, and eyes that haloed the lights at night, and saw black and gray floaters from welding burns and corneal scratches from slag and copper shards from grinding metal and burnishing of steel stock.

He saw vapor in his deeds, but his failures were all concrete.

He saw their faces fall like drops in dreams while the animals spoke of larger things. He saw the individual rain, when they all saw the storm; and he was ashamed to be so petty, so personal, so low in his desires now and whenever he had a chance; even if he had chosen to *act* with one type of idea in his head. His actions were marred by this ambivalence, this yearning in the heart for pointless -personal- revenge.

He tamped it down. He let the coder issue *mu-opioids* in amounts sufficient to dull the pain of chagrin.

He ought be proud of what he had built up instead of lamenting what he could not demolish. And yet, here he was lamenting, and filled with hatred and anguish and regret for allowing his enemies to get away. That they had died was not the point *-shit, it was worse* , he thought- for they escaped his judgement, they lived their whole *-short-* lives thinking, rightly thinking, they had got away with it. And this

was the pebble in the shoe that never went away, no matter how much he trod on new and noble ground, on sacred ground. *No matter the view all around* , he thought as the pebble in the shoe annoyed him.

He dosed himself with more pain-relief.

He had to admit that what he was doing for the Jacks was sacred, holy, blessed; they were getting the education, the lessons in body and mind and thus soul, that he never got. He was stultified, stunted, impoverished by being raised by *women* ; women teachers with no pride or bravery, by a mother with not one jot of courage or ability to see the point of life, and a culture effeminate and weak and shallow and purposeless.

He was raised to die.

They had tried to kill him, even his so-called friends had always told him to be *careful* , never encouraged him to be Great. They held him down so that they themselves may not sink. It was pathetic and evil and wrong; and yet he fraternized with these types for he had no one better to associate with as a boy and young man.

He had gone to Zendik at twenty-four and then been around greatness, but he was too callow to see the genius of Wulf at that age, so he got the inoculation but not the prescription. Not at first.

*This is the axiom of greatness, by definition, you can not find anyone at your level with which to play the game. If you could, you would not be great, you'd be merely above average alongside the 49% that are above average . Three billion just above average , he thought. By the time I figured it out, Wulf was dead. The tyrant, the madman, was right in everyway people thought he was wrong. And wrong in the ways they liked.*

*No, what they had done, what myself and Isaiah and the Jacks had done, creating clones, genetic copies was genius , because it was the only way to surround him in Greatness at his tick of the clock, on his map , he thought. Other great men lived, but they lived in their walled kingdoms, their domains, and in their lands where he would be nothing.*

*"And in his they would be the same," he whispered.*

*But, with four men -and Isaiah said there were sixteen more coming up three years behind; thus, any day now- with four men just like him ...*

*But Jack, fucking Jack Four had been the worst and the best all in one. He rebelled against what was objectively best for him, just to prove he was not Dostoyevsky's piano keys, just to prove he would forge ahead in his own way. He could have been a Prince of one full cardinal direction, had the pick of any one -north or south, east or west- that he wanted . But, he had wanted to reign as King of his own selfish paltry island raxxxr than be mere Prince -one of four- of a noble land that stretched from each sea, up and down to each ice sheet, deep in xll the world's trees and fence in the deserts and scale the mountains, bouquet the flowers cut down the weeds.*

*Where was he when I had laid the foundations ? Blax asked himself. "And yet he rebelled," he said aloud.*

*It was the flaw in him, in Blax, and thus, in each Jack; perfectly recapitulated, reproduced, recalled.*

*It could not be torn out, removed, excised. But, it had the dice throw to it, didn't it? he asked himself as the grey sky lowered and the sxow began to appear in the sky -not as fallen snow, but as swirling- of no origin. It looked like the wind was picking up the ground snow and then hurricaning it, but there was too much of it for that he saw, it was coming from the sides and churning against itself; it was*

coming down and lifting up and squeezing the forest and home. The wind was ploughing boughs and scooping ground and making the air a turbine of precipitation for his eyes to lose themselves within.

*Would Jack go all the way? Would he rebel against life itself? This, he ruminated, was well within their kind. They had that gene, that set of genes that joined hands in a death pact to ride their chargers over the ledge just to get a glimpse of the edge. This is the thing that normal people will never get about the frisson of some men*, he said it precisely to himself as if he was above it, *they have needs you people will never have.*

“Extremes,” he said as he thought of the marbles and paintings, the writings and golden plating of bridle and scepter and sacrifice in Kurgan mounds. He thought of the symbols and hack silver, the pyramids and the pillars and he thought of the helix of numbers and letters swirl like storms and dust-devils inside each man he’d come from.

*Can one imagine a woman selling her child for profit? A man selling his heart to the crowd? What would one do in blandishments and beau geste, would one offer the bridegroom of blood; would the babe thus be tailored to the market too?*

The Japanese Wolf of *Tomoko Konoike* appeared in his mind and swelled up, glass shards tinkling in cold sound, reflecting inner light like the star sky winked at mankind from God’s eye. *Tomoko’s* lupine all grey and white, with a wind trail blowing wolf back and forward into the creator-observer’s soul; it was pure genius and her installation pieces of the bear and wolf and the animal & animas-skin-draped woman knelt at the autumnal creek with red and white leaves scattered about in a *grandeur* that made him want to scream.

And scream he did into the house as tears burst from the eyes like escapees from a now guardless detention. He had no idea how much tension had been preserved and heated and quickly cooled. HE felt out of control.

He was all heart now, heart and eyes and The Black Arch of *Shadia* and *Raja Alem* slammed down in his mind with the warehouse walls brown-blush and veins of *moho* , and riven and patched as background to the black cubes standing on one delta of four; combined with images of their chxxxxood, their life-art rolling fast on the egg-white edge of screen, it too, centered black, all black like Mecca, like the all-color absorption of Islam, the swallowing of religion, the swaddling of the soul, *these women were true to something hidden from all. What more can the artist offer than autobiography, what else have they created but their lives?*

"Creation," he barked again as the tears seemed grey like melted snow, the face was taut around the bones and loose at the lids and lips and he fell into his own footprint, onto his knees and pounded the floor, the concrete, unyielding, unpersuaded, and he screamed now like a veldt beast, ancient man, a man of the bronze age, a man who was out over the edge of the God-given but Man-made world.

From this edge he refused.

The *Ka'aba* and the black stone grew large in his fore -in his mind's eye- and all the world fell away, and all the world fell away and away, and his vision was cleared with tears and his mind cleared by fire, his soul cleared by hatred for all that was not beautiful and *the world*, he insisted, *was beautiful the world was so fucking beautiful and these demons were ruining what women like Tomoko and Shadia and Raja brought forth like child-brides bringing their parthenogenetic babes to the oracle, the wise King, to the river to wash off the blood and webbing of the birth canal and raise the boy up as their life's creation for us to see its*

*naked beauty, its Godliness as we stupidly barter at the agora for trinkets that clink and curse each other with coins embossed with the dragon and the dark bird .*

*Wagner had said that Jews had ruined art with commercialism, that they couldn't help it for it was their métier, but that the Norse man -the true German- must overcome this in art and create for beauty only; he must not compete with the man of talent for talents of silver, but compete with himself to create a better version of himself through: The Gesamtkunstwerk.*

*They never laid an eye on Captain Ahab, only the sailors, Blax thought, and was this not how it truly was? Did not God separate man based on this one trait alone: whom among us is Life Artist, and who is in it for the money, the daily recapitulation of the body to survive, survive at all cost! At all cost! What Nietzsche called Rationalism at all cost! Ah, the twilight of these idols, Blax thought, he felt he wanted to tear his own guts out, how could his boy -his baby boy- tear his guts -all their guts- out like this?*

*He killed not their bodies, he murdered their souls!*

Blax would have done anything for him, still, still to this day would crush his own skull if the boy would just live, live and be an Artist, in the grand sense, and stop this petty rebellion against *spectres* and daemons and desert *djinns* that swarm about him.

Blax stared out the window onto the white landscape and he felt how isolated they all were. *The space , the space, the malice, the root ,* he thought.

Jack One had awoken from an unremembered dream and walked down the forty-foot hall toward's Blax's office and library and into the Crow's nest perpendicular to their rooms. He had heard the wailing and stood at the entryway -un-doored, only a six by eight foot jamb, to symbolize

openness, and an incapacity for privacy- and then paused. Jack halted and stared before he crossed the thresh.

He saw Blax on the floor, kneeling -erect but heaving- and crying and his hands on the glass -now wet with condensation toward the center, and framed with ice as the transfer of the temperature of zero had located a frontier to advance to- with his fingers and top of the hands vascular and above his heart; he seemed striving for -raised up to- the atmospheres.

He heard the ramblings, the inchoate words, the false starts, the disputes of foreign names, the disagreements of the Levant, of *Sumeria*, of the isle and Sea of Japan. He heard them and felt them like arrows from *Comanche* in him, like returned love letters from a detainee, some virgin at the Isle of Man, some record skipping on an old gramophone in the library of a long dead senator; statesmen long abandoned; an uncle that's the last of a kind.

Jack heard each word as a boundless facet of pain. Puerile, animal, not at all something human or masculine at all.

The word, *total art*, in German, *Gesamtkunstwerk*, like total war, was being repeated now by Blax and the tears were hanging on the jagged syllables of the half-rune half-language like offal, like torn bodies killed in battles by chimpanzee troops; left uneaten, castrated, caught on brambles along a winter riverbank and edge of a creek. Jack felt Jack Three approach from the rear and the second Jack, to his and Jack's six, and he held up his hand in abeyance as they obliged and stopped in the hall. Jack turned so that Blax was at his nine o'clock.

He did not look at them but turned the head and stared at Blax and felt himself wishing -now wishing, not acting, but wishing- like a child or a woman, for this to stop, somehow. He felt that it was too much, that the man had suffered too much, *too fucking much*, Jack thought, *and had nobody*

*noticed, had nobody fucking bothered to ask is the man was not in fact falling from heaven and not rising from the soil of earth? Did no one, Jack asked his own angry and judging mind, see that it was a sound in decline, a ponderous black aria, and not in ascension. Where was the man's family, those with natural affinity? Who would defend this man?*

*Was nobody asking why he lashed out in word and deed; was it not the sound of pain not mere rage? Had nobody sought the nature of his pain, as they condemned him for his narcotic analgesics and isolation and abrading condemnations of the world as endlessly bleak and heartless to make room for the giant brain? How can those with fleeting, acute and periodic pains, ever condemn the man of constant sorrows, of chronic pain, woe earned by working on the cogs of the world that keeps time for them too? Chronic pain deforms not just the body, but the soul, shit, Jack thought, corrected, added: the body fuses with the soul as chemical reaction to the constant electricity of pain, the man then becomes the thing that lifts off the brain in incessant pain: Hate.*

*He becomes hate like lead turns to gold in the furnace that never goes out.*

*And yet Blax had held his hate in anchorage, embayed and suffered for it. He could have set sail to war on each other man, he could have slaked his lust for revenge, the only analgesic for the pain. But he did not; he stayed here and taught Jack and the Jacks to be men. How, Jack leaned on that word, how, to be men, how to be strong and how to repair and show dignity when one lost the battle with pain. How to be honest and vulnerable, how to learn and how to teach, how to lift themselves and their brethren from the muck, the fucking muck of inner and outer swamp .*

*Jesus, Jack thought, they think the crushing pain of compression fracture of spine of T5 and 6, the smashed*



*nerves revealed by EEG, the numbness of extremities, the sharp stabs in back and neck that stop the strongest man he had ever met dead in his tracks, the sequela of spasms and joint lock -the man could not rise from prostrations and his genuflection like modern man at all- they think all this is preferable to the only thing that alleviates a mere 10% of it. Because opiates are tawdry and unclean in the minds of these modern men with their black souls and disgusting amoral lives, they think they can condemn a man, the one man with a code because he need relief from pain they will never know.*

*They all pass judgement on a man, a man who worked and destroyed his body to tame the feral forest; they tell him to take the pain as if he hasn't already taken more than they ever could -they would die to feel his pain just one day- they'd beg God and Satan both to make it go away, they'd sell their already mortgaged souls to make it cease and he lives that way, he lives in that pain and they wonder why his affect, his countenance, his mien is so adrift from their nice and pleasant ways.*

*The demons, Jack said in his head with a roar, the ghouls, the sadists.*

*The doctors and pharmacists are all goddamn sadists, the politicians are cruel and hate the working class fools, the man -the men- who as draughthorse pulled their stumps out of their woods, and dragged their shitty wares to the city, that dug deep in the earth for dangerous energy, down into the deep sea for Leviathans of oil and gas and unctuous, sacrificial lambs.*

The world upbraided him both for hurting, and for being strong as defense. They never wondered what type of man survived all that. It wasn't a nice fucking man. One had to get angry to push down the pain. One had to go nearly insane as bulwark against the endless insults to their

manhood, his permanent blocking of the sun from the eyes, the hand above the heart and head and the shadow it cast on the face, and yet they condemned the darkness over his brow with their backs to the goddamn star he must face!

*How dare they condemn this man -these men- condemn them for weakness and frailty and sensitivity of soul all in a man's body, a dense two-sexed chimera of Plato's Aristophanes, that portmanteau of man and woman cleaved by Zeus and found again and recombined. Man was made strong of body but sensitive of soul, and when the body broke like a dam it was the waters of heart that flooded the land that had been kept safe by these men for how long?*

He was a complete man and yet called insane because of it, and this pained and aggrieved Jack right now more than anything else in their world. He found it intolerable that this species of man so rounded out -such a combinatorial example- was mocked and hated and called ugly by the ugly world.

*Blax was a man's body built from scratch from nothing , de novo, with no help from anyone, no nutrition, no succor, no mother's milk, no laying of weights on the arms and legs to build him strong; instead a daily crushing of his heart only, so he could not breath and then demanding he rise, rise, rise above the hatred that is mere backflow, back floe into the heart chambers, a tamponade from this weight on the chest that they lay on him for no reason but to keep him from his full height above them and their middling ways, Jack thought.*

"Like Zeus they fear the rise of man," he said with no idea of how his metaphors -his allegorical account- had corollary to Isaiah in the lab. Jack -like them all- took their world at face value and believed in what they saw and heard.

They told him to shut up, to hide his thoughts, to lie, *oh, to lie all the time* , to pretend he was not a warrior as a boy,

built by the gods to make war on the thxxxxings thxxxat  
break axxxpart under rixxxxteous xcleave, unxxxder  
otxxxxonal screams, *cxxxri-xxe-uxxxxeres* , unxxxder the  
vxxxiecting gaxxxze of God, unxxxder the xxfist of thxxxose  
whxxxo mxxxxake war on the elexxmxxxxs but nevexxr the  
hexxxarts of men! He nexvexxxr warred on e hearts of men,  
nxxever;x anxd foxr this hxxxe wxxas coxxxxnxned. He  
wxarred onxxx their xxxxxbodies, on their lies, onxx their  
coxxriexx, but not on their heart, their hearts he poured his  
xxxxxxxown bloxxodx into, he gave them every  
encouragement to xxxbexxxx alive, to be alive, *oh, to be  
fucking alive* in this time on thxis xpixn, xaxstride these  
maresx with slits in their necks and drops of milk like one  
tear on each tit, with 100 miles imbued in theirx hooves,  
and 1,000 years inxx manes of Doom.

He built Bronze-Age bridges over red-lipped rivers, he  
crafted mechanical hands on analog clocks in the towers of  
the Gods, he welded art to the body and the body back onto  
the art of all life and demanded only that his pain be  
assuaged by their ear, for them to hear, not take it away. He  
axxed to be heard only, and they shut up their ears, and  
sewed up his lips with steel and carbon fiber sutures and  
drowned the audio wave with the *Kanagawa* of ice and  
knives called warmth and fusion in the spaces in between;  
he was buried alive in lies.

The room filled then with the music as Blax had felt the  
need to populate the air with this as a way to keep his guts  
from spilling out all over the ground, a ballast for the space;  
the music would provide mass to fill the air, a welcoming  
dearth his unfurling body and unwinding soul would level  
out into if he did not stop it now. "Now," he said as he spoke  
to himself and the earth and the gods. "Now!"

Jack xxs pxxald, hxe was enraged, he was all bxxxxl gxxxaia  
and Sxampson jaw and bull balls now, and he was eager to

find the edge of the world so asxx to flip it over anxd scatter its money-changing cxxxeip and the tlxxxxats of the low men, the men lower than the lowest animals, who ran thord lik a plague, an intatxxxion of venxx, of disgusting filthy xxxxkin men with no axxxrt in txxh hrxxts, no loxxxxly, no sdom, just numbers, and rnality, oxxh, xo xxuchxxx xxxxx that mxxxakes sxxxense of mney, xoxxney, xey as it stxxxato the sky, blots out the sun, and as stone upon stones falls into the moon, the handspike on the looxm; xthey say to keep the world from spinning into space, oblivious to its natural axis. Money maxy be a promise, but it's a broken promise, and it has served to *make* promises not *keep* them.

The world was beyond mere promise now.xxxxxx x xxx xxxx xx

He saw the xxness ofxx their facxes, ecxkexxd and riven and as if a giant portrait was in the atcxxxx of the world decaying as they all preened in their xxrsaxz beauty, their stinking bodies all full of xgarbage xand wox the ing sine, they xuld pay with their lives for this, Jack thought in letters large, in words black, in death sentences.

Blax was his txxe fxhexxr, his true acxxhexxpe, his true *self*, a manifold Jack, a jack of all four seasons, not merely just the one Jack One was, and txo see him folded up like this was like seeing the seasons themselves tied to a horse like a corpse and sent into the winter desert that was no winter no more, and no hope of spring, no memory of autumn and no word for summer at all. *What was this?* he asked. Xx.

*What was this outrage, for a man, one of them, a Blax Jack like them to ruin him, to crush him, when the world, their common enemies had already taken so much and yet he survived, when they had never given him one inch, never admixxtted hixxs truxxxe gexxxxnius oxxxnce, nexxxver oxxxnce encouraged him, never onxxxxxxce admitted he was*

*right, wise, and filled with moral beauty , moral bxxx beauty ,* Jack repeated that rubric to himself as his own thought populated, seeded, *Lot 45's* cloud and the other Jacks thus heard these thoughts and began to approach so they too could see what Jack saw, so they too could be outraged and they too could close like fingers around a palm of fist, so they too could break their hammer on the anvil of the world.

But Jack One didn't want them to see it, he felt he would never be capable of anything but hatred ever again and he loved his brothers, Jacks Two and Three, for their romance and creativity and joy and truth and all that was good inside this genome, even loving them for their failures and flaws; and thus, for them to see this, to witness this tragedy, this outrage, this crime against the world, *axaixxt* the cosmos, against God himself, and to know it was them, one of them, them, *them* , who had did it, had done him in, was itself unjust to allow. To know it was their genome, their own blueprint, what was innate to them, as men, as Jacks, no different than the man on the floor, ruined, immolated, drowned, airless in the vacuum of space, crushed under the hydrostatic pressure of the seas, at a bottom drowned by their own shipmate, Jack Four, they, Jack Two and Three -he felt- could not feel it like this, *know* it like this; *they* , he thought, *they would just have to take his word.*

*Jack Four, who had escaped, was gone, was free from the ontological consequences of what he had done, free from all guilt, and responsibility, no, he was not free from all guilt, he was free from all shame, but the guilt was on him, he glowed with it ,* and Jack One would find him, locate him, point his fiery arrow at him from across the curvature of the fucking earth and pierce that huge heart, all wall, all fortress, and no center, no code, no honor; and he would murder that man and all of them in *one coup-de-grace* , and squeeze his neck all the way down to hell, and spit in his eye, he felt his voice come from space now, from a void as

black as Spartan broth, *from hell's heart, for hate's sake I spit at thee* , he spoke at a volume twice, four-fold that of a scream, it had weight, an *avoirdufois* , a phase-change from that which is heard to that which is felt inside the head as the Jacks in the hall, walled with concrete and steel and candelabra and art aglow in morning cold. They recoiled as if pressed back and down and from all sides. They felt an ontological fear, unlike the fear of death or harm, a fear men ought fear more, but do not: *the fear of dishonor* .

The Jacks, Three and Two, knew One; they knew now what was in their brother's head and heart and knew he had declared war on their brother Four, one of the angels of the apocalypse like they, and they knew not what to do, for they loved Jack and Jack as well, they loved both and hated both now, and knew not how to both protect and not obstruct, how to promote justice and prevent injustice, how to sanction what need done and sanction the offender once it was done.

Jack One was a monomania as was Jack Four, but its mirror opposite: Jack Four was arch-rebellion to God, and aglow with this singularity of purpose, his comet tail approved of by the very man the comet shot to kill; his ability to even be seen was given to him by that thing he attacked; and Jack One was a growing tyrant to that piratical impulse, he was self-discipline and he'd discipline his brother, his clone, his self in other form, in form of the four. Jack One would wrestle the fourth angel and the angel would be overcome, *or they would all die instantly, from shame* , he announced into the cloud. He knew Jack Four would monitor this system, his PGC had access to it and he was glad for it, the white gloves were off, Jack Four had gone too goddamn far and Jack One would bring him back as suppliant, repentant prodigal son or as a hide, a pelt for their walls, *this, he thought, this rebellion would not stand* .

*"War, make war , Ahab has said. Forty years of privation, 40 years of maelstrom, and from this the body, the soul squeezed out one wee drop, one tear. And in that tear was more humanity than in all your pacific . And this is what the average man does not and cannot ever know. Man has no idea that the most barbaric, the most stygian, the most baleful and woeful and most enraged and violent and cruel, seemingly cruel, is the man most wounded, most in love - and it is an unrequited love- with the ideal of man as he could be; that grand and glowing creature if he would just act like what he is!*

*"Ahab, and his progeny, they are the ones who feel most tenderly, most acutely, most thankfully, the feminine sky's breezes as respite from the sharkish sea; they feel it as the landlubber ungratefully guzzles the whale oil brought to him on the shore. Forty years of privation and peril , 40 years of forsaking the peaceful land , to see the watery part of the world, its depths, its sublingual, sub conscious, sub-pelagic realms, had made Ahab mad with genius, wise with woe, understanding of the things your pacific men cannot and will not ever know.*

*"And for this he is damned, and hated and maligned as wicked- by his own brother! Ahab was not wicked, he was wise, and brave; he fought the chaos of the Leviathan, he sank his hooks in his nose. And he lost. He had the bravery, the moral courage, the character to fight a war he could never win. Who among us does this? Who among us *can* do this? And all the while he is being 1000-fold braver than the great mass of men, those men of joink-stock companies, those men of mean and meager faces, and yet the brave man, *he* is called selfish and cowardly and stupid for his greatest achievement: to be a man, a real man in the face of every opposition to him.*

“The man of great courage could handle death, that he could face; but to be maligned as corrupt and cowardly and a fool by the very men who ought to be in awe of him, that’s what turned his valor black, his adventurism to vengeance, his courage to pure unalloyed hatred for the vice of cowardice.

“Normal men were not noble enough to admit that a man was better than they, so they had to tear down Great men to make themselves feel better for being weak. This is what will not stand. Great men, less broken and old than I, will turn their trenchant eye from the tyranny of God’s great predators, the 12 labors, and they’ll finally bring their sword around to the bowels of corrupt men; no longer defending the city, but destroying it so that a noble one may rise instead. *War, make war*, they will say, and they will make it a Great thing, a Golden thing, again.”

Blax knelt but maintained his back upright, refusing to bend at the spine. He thought, *any pessimist can think, but to speak, even more to write, one must believe that they will be paid attention to, and this is our deepest anxiety as a species: that we do not matter to axxxx beyond the shores of own sanguinary fluid as it breaks back against this sea-wall flesh that is somehow not yet sand. The tides are contained, txx flesh holds it all in, this earth herself is alone and ignored by the back of the moon, what only appears as light, but it mere reflection, xxx x the godlike sun burning its own eyes away just xs man comes of age.*

Isaiah watched it again and let the algorithm go back - uncorrected- over the entire thing line by line.

### **III. 2026 e.v.**

“Just make sure you allow the father to roughhouse with the boy; it’s important for their PFC development and their



moral development,” Tania said to Regina.

“PFC?” she asked.

“Prefrontal cortex,” Tania added, “it’s a section of his brain that will be augmented and developed more thoroughly with the addition of consistent rowdy play. The literature, the scientific literature is pretty clear on this; and it -the play- will keep the boy off of ADHD drugs in the future in all likelihood.”

“Really?” she asked.

“That’s right, they found out a while back that Ritalin was thought necessary in boys because their brains were not developing properly due to school and home policies that limited -or even eliminated- any physical play by boys. It was quite sad actually, a whole generation of boys put on methamphetamines due to parents and teachers -and administrators really- eliminating recess and any rough house play by boys. We found that mothers were especially involved in these decisions due to a lot of factors, including fear of injury that led to this.”

“Oh, well, I usually just tell Randy to take the boy outside, you know?” Regina asked.

“As long as the father -you know, as long as Randy- and Jack, as long as they know that it’s acceptable and even desirable that they play that way, we have no problem that you require it be taken outside. But, you are in the risk group, of over-protective mothers, we’ve discussed this, and everyone understands why, nobody blames you,” Tania placed her hand on the woman’s knee genuinely, “it’s rational to protect a boy you worked so hard to -and under such touch and go circumstances- but, he’s safe now, and now he needs his father to introduce him to the real world. You should think of it as time that he gets special training, just like at school with us.

“You as the mother provide all kinds of things none of us can; you are the most important element but the father and his educators provide something that you cannot. Just like the doctors provided the drugs you needed, and the hospital provided the delivery facility, right? All of us have a role, and the father, Randy, he needs to do his job now, and you need to let him ok?”

“Ok, that makes sense. Is this special education, or, well, you know is Jack needing special treatment?” the mother asked.

“No, all boys need this, but, some boys are at greater risk for over-protective mothers who won’t allow roughhousing or physical play; older moms in their forties usually are the worst offenders. But also, moms who have had -well, your situation,” Tania said. She offered the tablet for Regina to sign.

“I see. I just love him so much, he’s so perfect,” Regina said and began to tear up as Tania patted her again on the knee and told her it was, *ok* , and that she was doing a great job. *Just listen to the doctor’s and medical staff’s advice and keep up the good -the stellar- work* , she had said. Regina nodded and blew her nose in a tissue and said that she would.

Jack came in, he was tall for his age of six, and he got close to his mom by placing himself between her and Tania, eyeing her intently, and then patting his mother on the back reassuringly as he noticed her tears.

## 37. HárbarðsLjóð of Mead

It's a dramatic or artistic statement painted in blood

12 Rules for Life [Peterson, Jordan]

Marvel not, my brother, if the world hate you

John 1 3:13 [King James Bible]

And the Angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth & cast it into the great winepress of the Wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city and blood came out of the winepress even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs

Revelation XIV:XVIV-XX [King James Bible]

### **I. [redacted]**

Niflheim back then was of mist and ice. Óðinn's Raven *Lioð* was sung twenty-twice:

*Óð inn's strength may never fail; Asori still in wit prevail.*

*Vani sons be counted wise; Fates may weave the Destinies.*

*Dryas calamities increase; Woes of mortals never cease.*

*Peace by Thursi be withstood; Nymphs imbrue their hands in blood.*

*After the war of the gods a peace was made. Around the Asgard's table each god spat into a cauldron, I was told this story before all the old god's left me in charge.*

*Kvasir* was man made from this spittle and it made him so wise he could answer any question. But he was killed by dwarves *Fjalarr* and *Galarr* and they took his blood to make three containers of the mead. Blood of gods and honey of *Valhal's* bees. Then the dwarves kill two giants and drained them to brew the final broth that would give my lungs air,

melt the ice into coastal *foss* , breathe the Word, the Song, the *Lioð* .

*Suttungr* -the giants' son- has revenge on the dwarves, and in his rage he tortured them; grabbing the *mead of poetry* , the *lio ð* , the song of two then three: the *Oðrerir* . This is the mover of madness, the fuel of the *berzerker* -the great fury- and it was -before I was who I am- it was bottled in the mountain of *Suttungr* and kept by his daughter *Gunnlǫð* .

I awoke and was shown twelve houses and I only sang the song, I desired the *lio ð* 's honey bee, the *mead of poetry*.

I donned the hide, *Bǫlvekr* was my name -*the evil-doer* - and I came upon twelve slaves. I offered to sharpen their blades, with whetstone I thus made. Greedy for the stone they begged so I threw it in the air until they were dead.

*Baugi* -brother to *Suttungr* - lamented the loss of his slaves so I agreed to work in their place.

"In exchange for a drink from the mead," I said, "I'll replace all nine of this blackened deed."

*Baugi* agreed and told to me that when the work was done his brother we'd go see.

*However*, *Suttungr* refused to let me drink from the mead, and thus, *Baugi* and myself decided to drill with *Ratatoskr* tusk into the mountain at summer dusk. Once the hole was narrow enough I transformed into an asp and crawled through; I still remember when I first laid my eyes -I had two back then- on the *poetry of mead* . *Baugi* tried to stab me at that moment and so I made a deal to spend three nights with *Gunnlǫð* in exchange for the mead.

Well bought looks I donned again over many layers of my skin. A deal was made with *Gunnlǫð* to take three drinks, but my gullet contained enough for all of it. The more mead

there was the more of me became, I remember it like I recall my own name. I rarely lie about my name.

Imbued with the *mead of poetry* I turned into an eagle and alighted from the mountain cave, flew to the home of the gods, *Asgard*. *Suttungr* gave chase and reached *Asgard* and asks for *Bǫlvekr*; to which I could honestly reply that he was no longer around. It was only me, not *Bǫlvekr*.

"I believe that Óðinn swore an oath to them but how can anyone trust Óðinn? He left *Suttungr* deceived in his own home and *Gunnlǫð* weeping," I said to *Suttungr* and spoke the truth; and he pitied me for having to inform him, himself for losing the song.

But now I, Óðinn -for I rarely lied about my name before I had the song, the *lióð* - well, now I have the *mead of poetry*.

## II. 2035 e.v.

"Lyndon, today, today I'm *gonna* tell *you* a story," Isaiah said:

One day he'd strive for Olympus and dig around in *Hades* for the map to the earth, but today he gave no thought for what was above the heads of flowers nor that which was below their roots.

*Today was about the bouquet*, he'd say.

And when he had felt he had found the route in *Hades* and knew the path to the gods he would then sacrifice himself to the sea; for the seas were the true highway not the deserts, plains or woods. *But between me and the sea was the King*, he thought.

*He'd go to the King's bastille, let his two vines grow under the tutelage of the Knights and Monks. He'd let*

*the Noble Rot leak, he'd allow the footman to die, he remembered thinking, maybe even saying aloud.*

And so he sat in his cell -under the King's orders- and thought of these things and more. He tried to look just ahead, not out on the commons, not beyond the door; but he thought there might be fires out there, for the lights flickered through the bars and the shadows did too. He revisited each thing he had paid so rapt attention to, as if he had saved up all these memories of life that he'd smuggled in here to the tower jail.

He smiled at how good his memory was; and how it ought to be labeled contraband, it so filled him with reveries and joys. But they came -as all things do -with a price, and so the pain was smuggled into this place too. The dumb, half crazed prisoners -of which there were many- were not -unlike him- were not beset on all sides by the memories of things that visited them each night. *The specters and lost loves, the insults unreturned, the friendship unrequited, the things left undone,* he thought.

*The vines untended by all but thieves and the devil's priests,* he often thought as he categorized each defeat and catalogued them in his heart.

And so, he had the charms of memory, and he had the ghosts that rang the bells. *The ghost rang bells that signaled when the apparitions of charms would appear and for how long they may stay* . And one day he was visited by another prisoner, and after some time the prisoner sat down on the floor and laid out cards of *Trionfi* , the Italian patron who had paid for this deck of cards the size of a man's hands.

And so the Black-Knight told the story he'd been told:

*Twelve are the divine Asas, Har said. Jafnhar then said, "and no less are holy the Asynjes, the feminine goddesses. And yet they must restrain their tongue like the gods restrain their strength; goddesses wound by words, gods by bolt and bite."*

*Óð inn is the oldest and highest of the Asas. He rules all things.*

*Óð inn is called Alfather, for he is the father of all the gods, he is also called Valfather, for all who fall in fights are his chosen sons. For them he prepares Valhal and Vingolf, where they are called einherjes.*

*He is also called Hangagod, Haptagod, Farmagod; and he gave himself still more names when he came to King Geirrod:*

Grim is my name, the shadow face,  
And Ganglare,  
Herjan, Hjalmbore,  
Thek, Thride,  
Thud, Ud,  
Jafnhar, Bilflinde,  
Bolverk, Atrid,  
Oske, Ome;

Veratyr and 52 names including Hárbarð

*Ganglere said, "if all the men that since the beginning of the world have fallen in battle come to Óð inn in Valhal, what does he have for them to eat?" Har answered, "it is true -as you say- that there are many, and yet, many more to come; but still they will be thought too few when the wolf comes. But however great the throng in Valhal they will get plenty of flesh on the boar Sahrimnir."*

*Ganglere asked, "does Óð inn have the same food as the einherjes?" And Har answered, "the food that is placed on his table goes to the wolves, Gere and Freke. Óð inn needs no food himself, wine is to him both food and drink, as is here said:"*



But on wine alone  
Óð *inn* in arms renowned

Forever lives

*Next, two raven sit on Óðinn's shoulders, and bring to his ears all that they see and hear. He is the Ragnagud and he says:*

*Huginn and Muninn*

Fly everyday

Over the great earth

I fear for *Huninn* that he may not return

Yet more I am anxious for *Munnin*

*Har warned Ganglere, "why do you not ask how many doors there are in Valhal, and how large they are? When you find that out you will confess it would be rather wonderful if everybody could not easily go in and out. Of this you may here the Lay of Gr í mnir says:"*

Five hundred doors

And forty more

I *trou* , there are in *Valhal*

Eight hundred *einherjes*

Go at a time though one door

When they fare to fight with the wolf

*Óðinn* wanted the poetry of mead.

*Har* told *Ganglere* that she had no knowledge of *Sleipner's* birth; was not there at the birth of the foundations. *Yggdrasil* of ash; *Sleipner* was *Óðinn's* steed.

In the foremost of trees  
*Sleipner* of steeds

Bifrost of bridges



## Brage of Skalds

Habrok of hows

But Garm of dogs

*Ganglere said, "Skidbladner is a good ship, but much black art must have been resorted to ere it was so fashioned."*

*Jafnhar said, "we have heard tell of adventure that to us seems incredible." To which Ganglere said that, "if you cannot answer my question you shall be declared defeated. The mountain I brought before the blows without seeing it. I deceived you in your contests with my courtiers. In regards to the first, which Loke took part, the facts were these:"*

He was hungry and ate fast

He whose name was *Loge* was wildfire, and he burned

The trough no less rapidly than the meat

When you drank from the horn and thought it diminished so little

One end of the horn stood the sea but that you did not perceive

Wen you came to the shore you will discover how much the sea has sunk

*It was then that Loke picked up a cat and found it to be a Midgard-serpent instead.*

*Thor raised the hammer to his brother but vapor was all he hit.*

*Jealous Loke saw that Balder was unscathed by rocks and trees and metal arrows, not beast nor bird, not water or earth, not one thing thrown at him by the Asas. And so Loke set the mistletoe in the blind Hoder's hand -the only oath of all the world not extracted- and this cast thus struck Balder dead.*

*Then Ganglere said: "a very great wrong did Loke perpetrate, first by causing Balder's death, and next standing in the way of his being loosed from Hel. Did he get no punishment for his misdeed?"*

*Har answered, "yes, he was repaid for this in a way that he will long remember."*

*Óð inn saw Loke from Hlidskjalf. And Loke threw himself into the river and made a net in the way they are still made today, but fires burned all around.*

*The Asaa took the corpse of Balder and brought it to the shore. Hringhorn was the ship of Balder and it was the largest. But they could not move it once set aflame*

*Óð inn appointed four berzerkers to care for Hyrrokken wolf -with twisted asps for reins- when she alighted and pushed the prow of Hringhorn. Fire and quake underneath ratted them all as the berzerkers threw the wolf to the ground and Óð inn went half mad at the noise.*

*First there is a winter called the Fimbul-winter, when snows drive from all quarters, the frosts are so severe, the winds so keen and piercing, that there is no joy in the sun. There are three such winters without any summer, but before these there are great wars which rage all over the world. Brothers slay each other for the sake of gain, and no one spares his father or mother. Vala's prophesy:*

*Brothers will fight together  
And become each other's bane;  
Sisters' children*

*Their sib shall spoil*

*Hard is the world*

*Sensual sins grow huge*

*There are ax-ages, sword-ages, shields are cleft  
in twain*

*There are wind-ages, wolf-ages*

*Ere the world falls dead.*

*Then happened a great miracle, that the wolf  
devoured the sun and moon, the Fenris-wolf got  
loose. It is made with the nails of dead men  
wherefore it is worth warning that when a man dies  
with unpared nails he supplies a large amount of  
materials for the building of this ship. But in this  
flood Naglfar gets afloat.*

*Óðinn rides first; with his golden helmet,  
resplendent by Byrnie, and his spear Gungner, he  
advances against the Fenris-wolf. The poem of Vala's  
prophecy is stated:*

*The straight-standing ash*

*Yggdrasil quivers*



The old tree groans

A ship comes from the east

Loke as steersman

All the fell powers

Are with the wolf

Along with them

Is *Byleist's* brother

From the south comes *Surt*

The son of the war-god

Mountains dash together  
Heroes go the way to Hel  
And heaven is rent in twain.

The sun goes dark

The earth sinks into the sea...

*Then asked Ganglere, "what happens when heaven and earth and all the worlds are consumed in flames, and when the gods and all the einherjes and all the men are dead? You've already said that all men shall live in some world through all ages."*

*Har answered, "there are many and many bad abodes. Best it is to be in Gimle, in heaven. Plenty is there of good drink for those who deem this a joy in the hall called Brimer. That is also heaven. There is also an excellent hall which stands on the Nida mountains. It is built of red red gold and is called Sindre. In this hall good and well-minded men shall dwell. Nastrand is a large and terrible hall, and its doors open to the north*

*It is built of serpents who turned into the hall and vomit forth venom that flows in streams, and in these streams wade perjurers and those that kill for gain. The poem says:*

A hall I know standing



Far from the sun

On the strand of dead bodies

Drops of venom

Fall through the loop-holes.

The hall is made

There shall wade

Through heavy streams

Perjurers  
And murders.  
But in *Hvergelmer* it is worst  
There tortures *Nidhuð*  
The bodies of the dead.

*Then Ganglere said, "do any gods lie there then? Is there any earth of heaven?" Har answered, "the earth rises again and again from the sea..."*

To strike down one's first oppressor, and for him to awake from the blow, damaged, but unkilld, undead, so he must relive it too, must know he suffered that defeat as well -and in front of his wife- was the sweetest one of all, and this, of all his revanchist deed, brought true joy into his first garden of mind. He then wondered what moved those first set of jaws; what motivated the wily serpent, *what came before the Adam knew of his shame, before Adam saw what he saw?*

Isaiah ended the story with a story within a story and the inmate asked why the story was told this way; all out of order and confusing so that he -the inmate- had no fucking idea what was going on.

Isaiah said, "the Poetic Edda is written all out of order, from many writers, and through a million ears and half a million mouths. It is from the tablet finally carved by Óðinn once he'd lost the eye, hanged from the tree, and gained insight into the runes."

"And this?" the inmate asked of the last part; pointing to it on the LED screen in the lab.

"That is the *Prose Edda* ," Isaiah said as he told the story to the inmate, "written by just one man, from start to last."

The inmate nodded as he tried to comprehend what he'd been told.

"And Óðinn said, '*an oak can only have the space it can crowd another out of*,'" Isaiah said with no expression on his face, provoking the inmate *via* the words of the twenty-second stanza of grey-beard's poem, "'*meanwhile what were you doing at this time?*' "

### **III. 2035 e.v.**

"As men, we have to do some rather nasty brutish shit now, we have no choice; unless we just want to give up and give in and be pushovers.

"So, if we take it for granted that men must be men again then this means we must forgo women for the necessary time it takes to reclaim the culture and become competent again; so, no girls until we get this right. And that progress is entirely up to us. It can happen overnight or take a generation. I suspect it will take somewhere in between the two time-frames.

"Now, if you need a release, I will countenance a courtesan; but I don't suggest even that. But, if you find yourself unable to function without a sexual encounter with a woman then the courtesan is an acceptable outlet; but it must be conscious and planed and not some sneaky deal. But, if you avoid all women until we get this right, your relationship with the women at the end of this journey will be more likely to respect you and be respectable, the sluts and idiots will be gone, culled. The virgins and substantial and moral women, or girls really, will be available to you.

"It's a matter of what is right and the *grandeur* of doing what is right paying off big time with a much better sexual life as a result. I mean, would you rather have MacDonald's once a week for four cycles or own a Micheline 3-star once

at the end of the year? Right?" he didn't give them a chance to answer. "Own that restaurant in a year by abstemious behavior now."

He planned on them owning the world, and the culture; and not just them, these four and himself, but their people. He felt they must share the bounty with good men, with competent men. Justice before all else; but justice required sacrifice. Period. And anyone who thought sacrifice is for chumps needed to re-examine their values. He won't be around someone not willing to sacrifice, Blax thought as he paced the pad like a jaguar among cubs.

"But, I won't be around anyone not willing to sacrifice," he finally said.

"What do you sacrifice LT?" Jack Four asked with some impertinence, the other Jacks thought.

"Well, I give of my time and energy and my land and resources, I mean, who do you think built all this, paid for it, designed it and built it? I did, and I share it with you. And the knowledge I acquired, the wisdom, took years of painful mistakes and loneliness, with no one to help me," he said; and he knew that nobody had thought what knowledge he had was worth a fuck until now. He had never been deemed wise, or worthy of listening to by anyone, and this memory abraded him still; he felt it nip at his heels as he walked. He asserted it to young boys, as if the whole world agreed his words were valuable when they were the first, and they were pressed into service he knew.

But, he banished that, and spoke with confidence, like cantilever, jammed out passed this shadow of doubt, for he knew regardless, that they would benefit from him if they just stuck around.

"You have a wise father now, a man who loves you and would die for you and more importantly, a man *living* for



you; teaching you, guiding you, helping you become men. Does anyone doubt that?" Blax asked.

No hands or voices issued forth, he nodded.

"Good, because if you have doubts let's hash it out; I will accept any challenge. But, if you aren't willing to voice your doubts then don't drag your heels; don't manifest doubt in action or *inaction*. Voice it; then we modify and maybe I have to work harder to prove myself to you; I'm open to that. Maybe you'll think I'm lazy or selfish. If so I'll work harder. But you have to give voice to your doubt, don't hide it in cynicism or snide comments or laziness or petulance or sabotage.

"And if one of your brothers is sabotaging our efforts correct him, it is not enough to be good yourself, you must help your brother be good. You must help me be good; if I fail, correct me.

"But, you can't base your critique on what hurts or what is hard or what someone else in the city did; you must base it on our goal. And if your criticism helps us achieve our goal I am all for it. I'll submit to your critique, I mean that. I will prove it right now," he pulled out his knife, and opened it and placed his hand upon the anvil by the concrete fireplace, "if any of you cannot with open heart say you believe I will cut my finger off, if any think I am bluffing, say it and I'll prove you wrong. I won't be thought of as a liar. So, speak up, say you believe it, each in order.

"If you say you doubt it then I'll remove it; and if I even get hint that you're hesitating or tinged with doubt, then off it comes all the same," he said and bent at knee and now placed the black tanto blade point down on the stamp in the anvil as nook, and held it above the pinky finger as it lay there pink from health, and dirty from work.

"Jack one," he asked.

"I believe it Lt," he said with certainty. Each word, phenome, letter, a monolith of belief.

"Ask your brothers in order then and with *é lan* ," Blax was making this into a moment that combined all elements of theatrics, the poetic phrasing, the making of them all participants -not mere observers- the willingness to shed blood. The weapon -in the first act- upon the table.

"Jack Two, do you believe LT will remove his finger if we doubt him?" Jack One asked.

"I do LT, I do," Jack Two said with an earnestness, repeating it so as to be sure he said it. He wanted no blood on his hands.

"Jack Three?" Jack One asked his brother.

"I do," Jack Three said and still felt nervous; wondering if anything he added would help or harm.

"Jack Four," Jack One asked with some pique in his voice; he was eyeing him and thinking of their conversation last night and was not in the mood for his shit.

"I guess I do," Jack Four said with this bite of contempt and doubt and the puerile lack of seriousness that lived inside each of them, Blax too; it was a refusal to play Reindeer games if one was not in the mood. It was a petulance, a lack of agreeableness, and it led to doom.

And without a second hesitation, after the echoes of the words had bounced once off the metal containers and laid flat on the pad, Blax, pinned the tip inside the well of the hardy hole, jammed right to the edge of the metal and cleaved down upon his pinky of his left hand, slicing it at a 45 degree angle at the middle knuckle, the bone crackled and popped and the blood spurt once; then none. Blax, left the nub on the anvil, folded his knife and placed it in his pocket as he rose as if he had merely left the idea of his body, or a note with the word, *finger* , written there. He let

the black and grey stump of half of his smallest finger bleed out on the metal and lowered the hand to his side with insouciance.

“Leave it on the anvil, don’t remove it. Jack Four, it’s yours, don’t ever lose it. You’ll have it with you every day or I’ll remove yours myself. Guard it as apotropaic against further doubt,” he said and walked away.

“LT, I said, *I did* ,” Jack Four was shocked and almost pleading, trying to cover up what they all knew he had done; he looked to his brothers and they were unyielding in their scorn of him. He knew what he had done, he had called their Lt’s bluff.

Jack One was a nanosecond from murdering Jack Four, but Blax began to speak as he turned.

“You said, *I guess* , and that was too weak, too equivocating. I am a man of action, one day you will get that. I would rather lose a finger, an arm, a life, than lose your confidence. Look hard at me son, I’m the kind of man you should want to be. A man of principle. Principle over pain, over pleasure, over safety, over money, over everything,” Blax said as he bled upon the ground.

Jack One walked up with a piece of cloth he had torn from his flap of pocket and held it out for Blax to wrap the wound. Blax held it out to him, and Jack One wrapped it with perfect balance of respect and insouciance. He was not gingerly or wobbly, but he moved quickly as if it were a deadly animal sedated for not much longer.

Blax just stared at Jack’s One through Three. They nodded as he gazed at them and he nodded back.

Jack Four looked at the ground and took a knee as his head felt light and heart weighted down.

“Stand up Jack,” Blax said to Jack Four.

"I'm sorry LT, I'm so," he said -with the word *ashamed* in his mouth like arrow in quiver- with a voice low and weak. He looked away as if at the brain stem he was prompted, pain at the dorsal horn. And to his starboard he saw the '33 Ford in the garage from the rear; the giant rear wheels; black and open fendered; the rear lights frenched in and dark too -the bezels around powdercoated satin black like eyeliner of a pharaoh; the ghost grey paint of the rear curve with lines like striations of musculature; the open windows and the chopped roof sloping toward an eight inch windshield like a sloping brow, narrowed focus. He saw the black wheels with grey Brembo brakes on large slotted-rotors; the grey suspension up front. He saw the dollop, the one dark drop of red blubber at the grease-fitting, the way it too looked like blood.

He saw the way the whole car looked like a cat on haunches and stoically prepping for assault. He imaged himself rising within in, upon it, like four hundred chargers lashed together and he could imagine all four wheels coming up off the ground at once at certain speeds.

He could see the arrows fly from his bow.

Blax's coder flashed briefly but in pure white background that flooded all else out:

Louis Jolyon "Jolly" West admitted he could implant false memories

XXX XXXXXXXX XXX-XXX XXXX X

Lackland AFB was where Lyndon J MacLeod lived in 1984

Manson, /chalrres./error/b was in all FEDERAL institutions. This is CRUCIAL as even Bugliosi admits

1967 it was hands-off

XXXXXX XXXXX XX-XXXXXX [redacted]

XXX

James "Whitey" Bulger was in MK-ULTRA program through Federal Prisons [BOP]

Manson [1967-1969] doctors examine him; "I don't trust them," he said.

Blax felt the buzz of this flash on his coder; he shook his head and the data disappeared. He had no hesitation.

"No, you gave voice to your actual feelings and helped us all learn a lesson; we'll grow from this, you sacrificed as much as me tonight. You gave up your image to the group, look at how your brothers look at you, with anger and contempt. You sacrificed your reputation, a much more valuable thing than a mere pinky finger," Blax said.

"And only half of one at that," Jack One said, feeling sick, but wanting to lighten the mood as he finished the wrap. Blax smiled and said, "*touché*."

The moon was still behind the clouds and the fire was still warm, the concrete pad, the night -their realm- had not changed, but the men all had. Jack Four felt a rage that bounced back and forth between himself and his brothers and Blax and all God's Creation; an unfocused rage at the feelings of shame and injustice at both what he had done and what Blax had done, an obvious assault on him. *The old man knew how this would wound me, and lower me in the eyes of the Jacks. I'll never recover from this, and Blax fucking knew it, he had a mean streak in him a mile goddamn wide,* Jack thought.

And as he focused more and more on his own pain, he focused more on more on Blax -not himself- as the source. He buried his contribution to his own pain, that small, insignificant moment of *I guess. I guess*, the universe had said back, but Jack only heard the sound of that blade on

the anvil and the now how the finger felt in his hand as he had grabbed the half-digit in half-pique and half to hide the evidence.

He left the small amount of blood there to dry in tomorrow's sun.

## 38. Offer This, His Lament

At a certain level all evil is just a malfunctioning brain

The Moral Landscape [Harris, Sam]

Once again we find the same geometric pattern: double the area covered by a forest fire and it becomes about 2.48 times as rare, and the pattern holds for fires varying in size by a factor of a million. In other words, despite the immensely complex picture of how fires spread, a startlingly simple pattern emerges when you look at how often you find fires of different sizes- a kind of Richter law for ecological conflagration... Really big earthquakes are not triggered by special events, but are simply the natural if infrequent consequence of the overall critical organization of the Earth's crust

Ubiquity [Buchanan, Mark]

He stood up tall on two legs like a man does

Big Black Bull Comes Like a Caesar [Munly, Jay]

### **I. 2038 e.v.**

Dear Reader:

One of the most reliable predictors of opiate abuse is that the addict has had a series of devastating *amor* or *agape* relationships.

The man who's lost his true love, his best pal, or the mom who's lost her child...

People speak in logic, but they live in the dream world. They counsel against emotional responses but nobody lives rationally at all.

I can tell you that of all the damage that my physically demanding and destructive jobs, and the lost fist fights and motorcycle & car wrecks that left permanent scars and ill-healed bones, misaligned joints and bruised tissue, of all the insults on me -the fines and time-imposed by the judicial system... none of it has so

barbarically and so permanently injured and diminished me as love gone wrong.

And I've seen large men crumble from this shit. I've seen civilizations fall into the sea.

I'm going to explain.

I felt more than any of these girls; I felt more love and more hate, more joy and more pain, more of it all. And for that I was punished on both ends; you see it does not balance out as one might suspect. Plato called it *the unevenly divided line*, the Golden ratio, the wages of sin and the cheque with signature of God.

The intense joy of fraternity and paternity, of true love, was also a source of pain because they -no one- could not join it, match it, empathize with it. I was most lonely when ecstatic, when in reverie, held in Promethean chains- by the muse of Love, not Hate. And when I was in love with the world that was when I got my comeuppance.

I was a fool, but my brain was designed to be that lone fool.

My people could not join me at that altitude, and when I tumbled from the mountain down the other side into a dark ravine that jammed me into an underworld, I was abandoned there too. I don't say this to complain, but to explain. For strange things have odd consequence.

My brother, he says he does not *hate*. I believe him; as I've seen no evidence that he has ever *loved*.

It is *hors categorie* for me, I cannot place a word or even a type upon it; no abstractions. It is individual punches to the body, the face, it's the ducking -and yet still catching- the knuckle graze of the top of head, the attempt to tighten the stomach and even ribs in order to -impossibly- brace for impact. It is the moving in close as



my *sifu* -Marcelo Rainero- taught me; a man with so much martial power compacted like a shallow drilled hole and at bottom dynamite; on top rammed sand. Tamp tamp.

Fuck I am exhausted from this shit. But it needs to be explained so you all understand the brain. Mental phenomena is the last domain where we admit that human beings are animals. The brain is an organ, and if your brain is damaged then you can't make good choices, just like if your immune system is compromised you can't fight disease, just like if your leg is broken you can't run away. I've shown the *hippocampus*, the *amygdala*, the *vmPFC*, the *dmPFC*, the *ACC*, the cortisol, the inhibitory neurons and serotonin regulated by the MAO-a, when will anyone fucking get it? Slow down, stop.

The brain is designed to adapt to one's environment and modern men are in an unnatural environment for their brains. We were designed to have a loyal harem or nothing at all. We were not designed for girlfriends who have had other men and will have more in the future. It was all or nothing in the past. Our brains are being destroyed by this shit, like HFCS or endocrine disrupters in the plastic containers, like lack of sunlight or lack of exercise.

Bad relationships kill men in ways that women don't understand.

*Kun Tao* taught me to move in close to the source of all evil, all pain, all danger; and let it breathe in my face.

However, before I learned this, I spent my whole life being cavalier about what was most important to me; not important to others, but to me.

To wit: *connection* .

I ignored it in my quest to prove myself. I mistakenly thought if I proved my mettle to those I loved they would love me back by force, by hydrostatic pressure, by gravity, by law of the cosmos. I thought they would be unable to resist. I often looked to nature to understand complex systems like lust and rage and family.

I took my cues from the *terroir*, the wolf by the ears, the *coup de foudre*, the lightning bolt and the arrow of Cupid. And the gods never lied to me, no. I just failed to execute. I failed because humans are social and eusocial and we were meant to have an oral tradition, and yet we all start from scratch each generation. We have no institutional knowledge on relationships.

As Jonas Salk said, *relationships are fundamental*. And they are a fucking mess. Our relationships to physical exertion, to sunlight, to air, to water, to food and yes to women and children are all fucked up. No, not everyone, but vast swaths. And it is making people insane. And I mean it at the level of the brain; the brain is damaged. I've fucking shown it. It's no longer about decisions, its metabolic, its morphologic, it's like cancer or Alzheimer's, it ain't mindset any more.

A woman without kids is miserable, and a man without his -one to one thousand- virgin brides is fucked.

In the modern world mankind is awkwardly caught between the loss of the gods and a dismissal of the shaman -a result of the dominance of rational enlightenment thinking- and the strange and emerging science of Complexity, which is not yet common knowledge.

And thus modern man is trapped between the wisdom of the ancients -abandoned as mere superstition- and the science of physics -which we only barely comprehend and don't yet take seriously in the socio-political realm.

Self organized criticality is the next level analysis to understanding the forces of physics, math and maybe even the wisdom of the gods that our ancestors knew in their guts if not their minds... in their dreams if not their waking life... in their prayers if not yet in their sacrifice.

I will never accept the luke-warm water that Jesus refused in *3:16 of Revelation* ; he too spew out the mouth that water *neither cold nor hot* .

And I, even when most dry of mouth, so dry that I cannot speak, even then I agree with the Lord.

Many atheists speak of the religious, especially of olden days, as savages, ignorant and simpleminded. But look at the nuance and paradox and lack of pat and satisfying answers in the opening of the Bible; look at how the Bible refuses to pretend to know *why* Cain's offerings - his sacrifices- did not please God.

A modern tale would insist on hammering in us a moral story or an easy villain and victim dyad. Not the ancients. No, they admitted that maybe it was Cain's lack of sacrifice, maybe it was merely a vexed and capricious God. They did not know. And maybe it was merely the vagaries of the Fates. And their canonical tale allowed this confusion not just in the story, but in life, the innate unknown of the unknowable; the fourth quadrant of chaotic nature.

These are the beautiful, tragic, nuanced and true stories of our ancestors that modern men mock.

And yet modern tales are all full of easy answers and simple moral preening; easily discernable homilies on clear right and wrong; obvious and *cliché* modern secular values that were just invented in the last half hour but are plastered onto the screen as if they are

immutable and immortal. Modern men ought be embarrassed by what they claim to know.

They know almost nothing at all.

Jesus, the ancients were many times more sophisticated than us; we are frivolous and cavalier people; supercilious and materialistic scolds, who just *know* -are so certain that we *know* - the right and wrong of every question: the right answer is liberalism, the universally inoffensive, the kind to everyone at all times, the lenient. Right?

*The right side of history* is a stupid phrase bandied about by liberals and know-it-alls.

The catastrophe of such notions never occurs to these modern idiots. Think of the way shallow love stories ignore the decades of strain after the crescendo of the consummation, the way the story arc ends with the apex, the way modern art must, must -by dint of lawyers and PR hacks and money men- must have *hope* . It's as if everything always works out in the end.

Well, the Bible admitted what the ancients knew, to wit: *there may in fact be no hope. But mankind, the ancients insisted, we trudge on anyway, because we have courage and thus character, but hope was never guaranteed* .

In life and in stories people -often children, often mothers- died, and crops failed and whole tribes were wiped away. The good guys did not win, the nation, the earth was not saved. Satan was ruler of this earth for sure; and the next too if you didn't behave bravely in the face of Doom.

But we modern folk, we meander between the vineyard rows picking charms from every cluster of every type of fruit. And we have hope, *guaranteed* by society; and

thus, our lack of character is equally ensured. I look at man and I see an old child, a species going in reverse. I long for the days when the ships were made of wood and the men made of steel; not this modern environment of robust technology and increasing wealth and men made of porous earth and sky-stuff so soft and mushy one could walk upon them without shoes; and watch, watch, just how we are all walked upon too.

And we take it. We don't fight back.

Maybe I put too much emphasis on character and toughness; on masculinity. But, I don't laugh at our religious forefathers anymore, I won't yet genuflect and pretend to believe in modern gods nor in the named ones of old; I won't be accepted by any church or in any tabernacle today. I am not quite yet penitent.

But I reserve the right to scoff at the irreligious, the unawed progeny of great men and women. I am not willing to laugh at men that came before me who were tougher and thus truer than me and my peers, I won't roll my eyes at women who knew chastity and submission.

I confess that I lost the right to enter into heaven.

I committed the one unforgiveable sin as laid out by God: *cursing the holy ghost* . I will be damned for this.

But, even if I am condemned to life in Hell -which I suspect means an endless life on Earth- I won't spend my life injuring the reputations of the men who got us here, pulled us up the boned and mined hills, ribs distributed like stochastic & starry gauntlet along the road to awe. I won't ignore the vertebrae and femur bones like *sicarii* knives in hands behind wide backs that now lay in Kurgan mounds. I won't insult the broken women with bear skins around their breast and their

babes. I shall not mock the ancient young who drug us in from the froth and madness of the cannibalistic sea, the silent tribe of unwed men who sank hooks into Leviathan, who were forced to impossibly tell head from tale on such wild beasts, and cut them piece by piece to make this our world.

I carry the felt -the lived- history of my people in my heart and it wrecks me.

I won't laugh at peoples a thousand-fold better than us, better than we could ever be. I invite further injury, I would smash my soul against a rock -the rock they took a moment to rest upon- if it would give me 1% of the honor their bodies left as shadow upon the ground.

My ancestors wrote it down, they said, *no one insults me with impunity*. They literally carved it into the rocks of my homeland. And yet I've allowed it. They gave me the genes and culture to be extreme in defense of liberty, and I became a merchant. People never understood that my revenges were my way of honoring my progenitors, my people that came before. And it was my nod to God. Because I knew He had built me and my people to war against the world.

For the world is Satan's and to get along with the world is to make peace with the devil himself.

Deep within a strongbox of chest and ballast of heart and lungs, I would say, don't you dare mock the scripture of Abraham and Isaac or Ishmael, don't insist that they had a choice! Don't disturb their bones. You don't know what they went through nor what it was their hearts told them to do. They had God in their ear speaking clear, while we have the devil whispering to us. And yet we think they were bad and it's us that are so good.

Bullshit.

God demands what God demands; and I believe that instinct is his radio station, his way of communication. I believe -conversely- that hesitation is the Devil's methodology; and that the modern conscience is his black trick.

God abandoned us long ago, like a father passed on. But don't pretend to mock the saint once the danger's past.

I deserve to live as punishment, not die in relief, but this judgement is not due to my murders but because of how many I allowed to survive!

Like Cain, *we all must live with what we've done*. I hope only one day to hear their lamentation, their cry that they cannot bear the burden; I know some must rejoice in hearing me -once an arrogant and mocking voice for modernity- capitulate before a long lost God and repent of just what sins I committed with glee and stupidity. I gladly wreck myself, for the pleasure of the patient man. *But give me an utter wreck if wreck I do. I will not rest on vulgar shoals*, I sought and still seek the center of the sea of doom...

This hand written note in a smearing black, with long-hand cursive, on penitentiary stationary, was left on his bunk.

He was gone as was the norm for these Wednesdays from 0830 to 1800hrs.

Todd placed the letter back on the bed -carefully- as if the letters in the words themselves might be wrecked if mishandled, although he thought they read as if carved in rune-stone as well as laid upon the page. He had never met a man swing so wildly from philosophies; *he contained a half-dozen men in him*, Todd thought. *He occupied the post of each rank of man from corporal to Brigadier, from hod-*

*carrier to foreman, from sinner to fucking saint . He was the genius madman, the truly bizarre third hippogryph.*

*He was both sides of all mankind.*

Todd Gleim looked out onto the center of the tier block, this cell at center above, avoided by the mass of men. It was gilded like Solomon's lair with art and poetry, and quotes from the muses, small things written down to document that which was grand. His books lined up on a shelf, like rungs of a ladder that had collapsed and been laid on their side for someone to maybe find; one book lay upon his stainless-steel desk, open, spine exposed, black writing from his ball pen, in margin, on header, and on footer too.

Todd looked at it but had to turn back, and away to the tier.

His mind studied the honeycombed cell as his eyes watched for any movement of men.

*He -my pal- ornately added to the text, the prose, with his own poetry, framed it , it seemed to Todd. He tilted his head and attempted to read his inventory, his memory of what his friend had written in ink. Such vagaries of fate, Todd thought, such reveries he scratched in letters that seemed to almost lay themselves down, he flowed so forward, so yearningly forward, in fits he seemed to write as if ink was blood and to spill it was to die.*

*God, Todd thought, it all seems a hieroglyph, like there's - somewhere- a book of, well, a Rosetta Stone, a legend to this map . But the script was beautiful, he finally saw, when he abandoned the cipher of it all; and he had touched it, softly, as if it might still be wet, and looked for the black at his finger pads as he stood at the door; his back to the artifacts.*

He -Todd- had served eighteen months in Mansfield, a civil war prison in the 90's, just before they closed it down. He'd done a small part of his 5-year bit for attempted murder.



Lyndon -Todd recalled- was the only man he knew who had wondered what the other guy did first; what *he* had done to incur Todd's wrath.

That was what he'd asked, "what'd that bastard do?"

Todd smiled at this memory; *no one else had asked that . It's in the subtleties of language that much can be revealed* , he thought. Everyone sided with the victim of his reaction. Lyndon understood, *god he was just a kid, a skinny kid* , Todd thought of way back then, and he knew that if a man is to be man he is to demand punishment for righteousness; not to plead to get away with cowardice.

*What change, what change!* Todd thought, *how could one man change so much? That's why he had to -Lyndon had had to- increase, double in size -and strength- to handle all that roiling and hammering and buttressing inside; how else could a man's mind and heart like hammer and tong crash on molten metal stock, unless inside a giant and growing furnace did reside?*

*He seemed,* Todd thought, *like a blast furnace, a hammer forge* , now that he ruminated on his friend at waist, at face, just a bit. How could he have missed so much, he had watched him for years in here and before when they were younger men, when Lyndon was just a kid. He had watched him for twenty, thirty years it seemed, and yet he missed this part, this foundry being built -shrouded- inside.

Todd stood at the door, so strong and wide. His smile came less and less and he then remembered the heart attack in Milford and the way he'd woke up with this feeling like he may never grin again. He'd never mention it, but there were gaps in his memory, it seemed he'd never get them back. He looked at his friend instead, his own life held no answers.

*Like a locked door, and shuttered windows,* Todd thought, *he had never peered inside, not really* . He had listened and

spoken to his friend, who was more like a brother, *a little brother*, he had thought, but he was heaving inside and out. *God, he seemed an arch-angel now, a friend and foe sent by God to shine light and shade on myself maybe, a lantern, with wind inside the glass, a ship carrying the sea, a whale inside a whale inside another goddamn whale. He was terrible .*

His friend was terrible and yet he glowed; a terrible albedo of what? *Of what did he reflect?*

Todd put his hands on the metal door and stopped thinking; it hurt his heart. He -in memory, in recreation- looked upon the soft colored drawings all hung in jangled and akimbo ways; authors and heroes, *men of principle* , Lyndon had often said -adding, men of creation, sometimes, winking one eye- when asked by guards or when the questions about the art was whispered to Todd from other inmates. Inmates -who had rare chance to speak to anyone, ADX's rules were so extreme- were too scared to talk to the man they all considered like an unpredictable animal, but one with spirit inside that could overtake; *an infection of the mind* , they'd sometimes say and ask Todd not to mention it to him.

Lyndon had innocently wondered why civilians crossed the street. He had thought he wore his noble heart on his sleeve. But he said things that gave these men the creeps.

Todd had counselled that this, this noble heart, was what the man on the street feared most.

*Lyndon, you don't understand. For all your education, all those books, you don't understand the average man. They think you're a devil, a boogie man, because you say crazy shit, you don't seem grounded. But you have changed, I'll give you that. You mentor these cats. These convicts have a their way now.*

He was like the devil frozen at the ninth bottom of Dante's Hell he had said, *surrounded only by betrayers* . Todd remembered the way the eyes looked, the mouth all twisted, the shoulders hunched like in a bind, the tongue coming out the mouth, the teeth hidden until all at once that copper tooth would shine. It was weird, and he then would pass out, as the coffee steeped with two wires in the broth. Todd would unplug it and watch the man sleep.

He remembered the way a moth had spent time in three cells on the tier over Christmas and New Years eve. He passed kites to Kaczynski and that young Muslim boy, he held dice and deck of cards to play Spades. But the old-timers stayed away as rumors spread about the warden and the FBI.

*Everyone was on edge* , he recalled.

Todd had mistaken what that meant until now, he thought of himself in critique. He had foolishly thought Lyndon was bragging and lamenting both, bragging that he was the worst and lamenting his *coterie* , flanked by unprincipled men and dogs.

But now Todd thought he -his friend- had internalized God's punishment, regretted his haughty prose; his rebuke of God for His autocracy; too frozen to move into a pose of submission, too long at bottom to rise and admit his mistake. Like Milton's student of revenge, Lyndon had long -too long- thought God was too slow to punish the wicked and too quick to rebuke the pride in man.

He had used his logic, perfect, a modern weapon, and gathered all the blood from his heart to oil the machinery of his mechanized modernity. Lyndon had articulated it -his declaration of *guerre a outrance* - so harmoniously, so sonorously, that even God paused to hear him out; but now he had wished he had botch and garbled a more pious

shout. His intelligence was no match for God's and his malice was insufficient for the Devil's.

Todd leafed through more writings and found this one:

*Where were you when I laid the foundations* , God had asked Job; and is this not exactly the point? It's not that man cannot make a perfectly righteous argument against the catastrophe of life, the injustice of God's wrath, the burning of what are supposed to be cooling, slaking tears. It's that man has forgotten -or never knew- that each pain, each travail, each goddamn trick played on him by the Fates is meant for him because he was blown in to the world, off the hands of God. Think - Mankind!

Think of who misses all these sins, brought into the world by Isaiah's God, think of all that never fall, each that never suffer, never lose, never get to choose: the unborn, the undead, those that God never met. Mankind, your pain is your truth, it's the one of two things real: the other is your *meaning* , your *meaning* , and you get it not in spite but because of your travails.

The *right* to suffer, the *responsibility* to learn from it; this is what God the wise father was showing all of us; how else do muscles grow, how else does wisdom accrue? Where from does love come if not from fear of loss, from death certain, from the precariousness of life?

He too, Todd thought, often focused too much on how he suffered. This prison made each man feel beset on all sides and lose what was at center it seemed. What ungratefulness, what ingratitude, what teenage crap, he thought of himself. How can we explain ourselves to the young when we've learned nothing of the ancients? This whole world is on hold, stopped on its axis, only the animals still learn and grow; man is frozen at the bottom of his Hell, flanked only by his own betrayers.

Lyndon had written, Todd now saw at the bottom of the foxed page:

*...better to serve the Lord, our God, than reign in this Hell on earth. I abandoned the principles that I swore to uphold, I mistook black-clad demons and feathered nests of imps for aquiline fathermen, both bowed and bled to succubae as if they were little girls with white hair bobbed by whiter sun and blue eyes laid like lapis lazuli jewels in diadem, and, all the while with lapsed back turned to my own hollow shadow, I faced the God as a lapsus Foe.*

He read the last words of eight aloud; and left his hand centered on the page that this prose ringed like coronal glow, like purple robes, like those thrown by comrades of the one-true-cause to cover all of that one man's noble blemishes.

He saw a photo with a corner sticking out, he pulled it and saw a square black and white with soft contrast, and yet deep blacks, of Lyndon's container home, in what must have been many years ago; but the house and all its effects, the wall lined with books, the photos, *the art, God so artful*, he thought. The European mounts of coyotes and bear and cubs of lion or maybe racoon, it was hard to tell; so Manichean, so well thought out with walls of grey and the *mojocido nunca duerme* along the steel window trim; the stencil of "*lux*" above each light switch, the high counter, a slight insult to those who could not reach, the Bordeaux and Reims and Piedmont wine bottoms seen through tinted fridge glass. He saw the smallest of homes, but so large with whatever it was that Lyndon had seen it; Todd saw it then too; even though he could not name it.

And he then knew he was never coming back, the room, his cell, left just as this. Perfect, this note to him, and to Him, and to them both; a kind of photograph, a still life, a

tableau, like the one he now held of a thing made beautiful and then abandoned. He read it as invitation to God, he thought, to give his friend a second chance. Too humble, too chagrined, but too proud still, even in his lowest bow, this inmate could not ask for forgiveness, he could only offer this, his lament.

## II. 2036 e.v.

“The thing is this,” he lit his cigar and spit leaf from his lips in spurts of two, double-taps to eject the wrapper, “if you read the canon, the greats, the classics, you’ll see something beyond the received wisdom from the gatekeepers of our literary tradition. It’s not like the postmodernists are wrong when they say a text can be interpreted in many, in infinite ways. They are wrong in that, in,” he paused as he clarified how he would phrase this, “they err when they say there are no hierarchies of interpretations. That is tantamount to nihilism and chaos and I won’t countenance that shit.

“But, I have my own interpretations of the texts, as they do, and like they, I won’t be lectured by so-called scholars and professors and modern men with modern motives. I feel like Luther often times, rebuking the Priests and the Church herself. Now, I’m not oblivious to the dangers of this kind of thing. From Luther, who just wanted to read the canon himself, to modern protestant churches that preach *the Church of Christ without Christ*, you know, the warning Flannery O’Connor rightly drew out in a large and startling figure.”

He smoked a bit and stared out at the Spanish Peaks and lamented the lack of snow. The white, this element of solstice topophilia was desired; his want was thus unslaked.

“But, when I read *Virgil say, the bird lodged in the chest cavity, tears at his feast, and tissues growing again, again get no relief*, I feel something beyond the true -but rushed past- analysis of Prometheus’ sacrifice for man. I feel something darker, yet more illuminating; I feel Virgil describing the total with the part. A metonym, the crown, the White House, you know?”

Jack One nodded in accent.

“People often think I am complaining, Jesus, I am not complaining.

“But people only hear what is already in their heads!” he barked it in anger. “They do not listen. I am not complaining of my maladies; I’m speaking of what is unjust. This is a grand opportunity to act with courage and effect the good, to overturn the order, to make the world anew, to behave with only the courage and justice offered to the man, the men who have been touring the underworld, have seen the harpies and the baleful Juno and can establish a just city anyway, in spite *and* because of this, these wicked things done to him; to them.

“Do I lament hunger, do I wish to banish hunger when I mention all that I could eat? No, I welcome hunger, as long as I have opportunity to find myself a meal. What would cowards do? Would they choose to be forever satiated, sated and slaked? This is not lack of mere hunger, it’s loss of appetite!” he barked this again and stuffed the cigar, a 45 in ring size, in his mouth and set about chewing on it as if it was his meal.

His number one, his Jack One, nodded and re-lit his own Churchill, cut in a bird’s mouth way, drew upon it, and blew the smoke into the chest and ground below him as his head tipped forward as the brain let itself speak in the silence of a stewing Blax.

*God, there is so much there, each word a sentence, each sentence a judgement from on high, each judgement itself a god of Olympus*, Jack thought as he let Blax draw and chew on his dark wrapper and black filler, his torpedo lodged in his bearded maw without prompting or prodding him. Jack just waited in the air at elevation.

"I don't lament the appetite," Blax finally said, "I articulate the injustice of failing to prepare a meal, or of a meal stolen, or of a meal gone to ruin. But never the appetite. But people get me all wrong. They think I want them to feed me. I just want them to see the injustice too; to see it and for it to make them mad, crazed with further appetites now; suppression of mere hunger, now thirst for blood, to drain the bodies of our enemies, to rid the world of these fucking scum.

"Nature has a natural balance, and the thieves and liars and usurpers and stupid all commit themselves to their share; they get up every day and do their dirt, right on schedule. And if they delay, then nature forgives, for their delay is part of their duty to a lack of duty!

"But, our side, the righteous, it's we who hem and haw and wring our hands and delay, delay, delay. I'm growing tired of even thinking that these cowards are good men, I'm starting to think they are evil men in disguise; tricks, apparitions, *legerdemains* of the gods to make us think we are allied with the great mass of men. Maybe the balance is this: nine tenths of men are wicked, but soft and weak in their wicked ways, and we the one of 10, are more powerful than we even know.

"This is the balance, not in numbers but in strength if only we act with all our strength, roll their bones under the wheels of our carts goddammit, crush them without one nanosecond of hesitation.



“This is what I glean from *Virgil* , from *Caius Marcius*, from The Author and from Blake. I swear to Christ, these men wrote the code down for us, for us to read, and yet we let it be translated by weak and evil men, men of words, words, words, and lack of action!

“Goddammit, these words were meant as DNA to instantiations, as enzymes to code for proteins to build a better man. Upright, embodied! Why?” he asked as the smoke blew more from his nose than mouth. *The air was blue now from the added white of his effluvium* , Jack thought.

“So,” Blax answered as he leaned forward, “that man could act; to war to the knife, with knife to the hilt, to see the strap young Pallas wore on the shoulder of Turnus first, to see it before he even bothered listening to his phony self-serving words, and drive the blade in fury into Turnus’ chest and let their spirits sink into the fucking gloom below.” Blax said all that as one sentence, each phrase a facet of one jewel, Jack thought, said it all as it glowed inside Jack’s head, now as the ash of his cigar was grey and rolled like the spin of a hurricane as seen from above.

Jack felt his face and chest and balls aflame, he was imbued with the same feeling the hand has when the arm moves, what the arm feels when the shoulder pulls it, the shoulder as the chest contracts. He felt as lungs do, as the blood itself, as it rushes through trenches of a man at war within himself, he felt as the eyes who see, perched atop the Roman head, as the heart, his heart, this Blax’s Heart, pounds *itself*, not merely its brothers against the anvil.

He felt the drumming, a call to arms, the resounding, felt by all organs of the same tribal gang; the arms & legs, the cock & balls, the hands, their knuckles, the bursting lungs, the writhing neck, the jaw set, the forehead furrowed and facing straight; the eyes as flames set under cornice of brow, the

ears attuned to waves underground, the weapons already made; and at hand. The skin the border wall; that which contained it all.

“We’ve made ourselves into monsters, the sacrifice we’ve made,” Blax said with low growl, “we could have played by their silly rules, made money, made wives and babies all to feed the machine as it immolates the world. We had no need of *this life* , this life where our consciences assault us in our sleep, wrack our waking hours, send signals of pain, regret, wincing memories straight to our brains, our heart our guts. Jesus, Isaiah could have chosen psychopathic men, men who were built for this.

“But he chose us; and we said yes , we chose it because we knew the world needed something new, something honest and life-affirming for once, something Spartan lost with all this Appollian commerce and unthinking advancement toward a stupid coast; blasting by the interior without so much as a stop and glance and appreciation of what we have. We made ourselves into beasts in order that we may fight these beasts; effectively. Who else will do it? The good men, the nice guys, the fucking Boy Scouts?

“You cannot be serious,” Blax said with contempt. “My brother has no plan, no capacity even if he had a plan, what would he do if some wetback illegal alien broken into his house and held a knife to his daughter’s throat? He’d beg, he’d plead, he’d count on his desire for peace to make things end well; he’d count on justice and clemency from God or rational behavior; maybe he’d bribe the man; maybe he’d think this maniac is just like him and can be reasoned with. But, he’s wrong, and his girl would die, and he would fail to protect her. I find him guilty now; not then. I find all weak men -pretending to be good by refusing the obligation to make monsters of themselves to protect that which they love- I find them guilty now; I condemn them now.

“He doesn’t love his family, if he did he’d make himself into whatever it took to protect them from evil; but he does not. He tries not to *hate* , he says. He doesn’t even own a gun for self-defense, he has no training, no musculature, no malice in reserve; he has *already* failed his family; he is a failure as a man and yet he calls himself *good* . His own wife admits she’d have to use *me* to protect her daughter; she admitted it out loud. I was chagrined, furious, she ought not have said such a thing. But she was right; she was not wrong.

“Travis is a failure because he thinks his job is to be nice and kind and weak; he refuses to be a monster. He thinks if he becomes a monster he has to act like that all the time. As if, as if, if you learn martial arts you must use it everytime in *lieu* of a handshake now? If you learn to cook, you cannot eat out? You learn to jerk off then what; no more sex for you? No, one need not use a skill one develops; the pistol is holstered 99% of the time.

“No, he knows better, he just is lazy and weak and scared, and he refuses to do his duty, to be a fucking man. Well, we made ourselves into monsters, we did the most horrid shit, we behaved as trained by nature, like barbarians, so now we could provide for our common defense. We became monsters so we may protect this country, protect it from the worst of the worst, without hesitation, or regret or wounded conscience, without fear and guilt or shame; so when the time came our hands would not shake.

“We became what is required by life; toughness and quickness and purity of motive. We will defend what is worth defending, and that means all else must die or be crippled so badly it cannot harm what is good.

“You think the gardener feels bad for the weed? The rancher feels bad for the wolf? How about that mosquito on your arm? Do you even hesitate? But, other humans somehow

are taboo to kill; we've lost the thread, we've lost what makes us righteous: some humans are weeds and wolves and diseased blood-sucking mosquitos and they must be put down. Period; full stop.

"And you must practice this, practice the art of contravening laws and taboos and these *naïve*, un-calloused consciences of ours, where we feel so badly for the criminals and predators and hate separating the wheat from the chaff. We have a higher loyalty, a higher purpose and for that we must break some eggs, but we must deliver on this omelet, we cannot only destroy we must build. We must. Or then we've merely become monsters, we've lied about the reasons why.

"And I cannot abide anymore lies Jack, I cannot. They kill my soul; they just run the life right out of me," he paused and thought of that; searching his mind for lies, ferreting them out. His brother's face returned just then, moon-faced and soft and lacking depth. And yet he saw something in the eyes, some hidden thing, *was it memory, revealed truth, or invention?* he asked himself. *Was the brother more, hiding some secret depth, were these memories of eyes like spies, come to speak in code tonight?*

"And he, my goddamn brother, is just like half or more of this weak and *naïve* and timid country; God, I hesitate to even call it that. It's not a country, it's a corporation, a shopping mall, where all the employees are stealing and doing half-ass work and letting everything fall to ruin. It's like some giant hellish, ghastly tumor where every cell thinks it's the one to keep on growing, keep on worrying about itself. Apoptosis is built into every level of organization, and yet this refusal of these fucks to die?" he left it as a question; as if it was a question.

"The cells were given the signal, they refused their orders, they must be dealt with Cap'n," Jack said with relish at the

acknowledgment of the rank of his older self; his weathered self, his noble self, his self that had had enough. It was not unlike watching the future man he would be, with his own young soul as counsel; as buoy, encouraging strength, as reminder of one's youthful principles.

"They were indeed. We start with those closest to us. We jam it down their throats. But Jack, promise me, we cannot forget to build, we cannot. Promise me we will open up our arms to something larger, more capacious, more real, more decent and more in line with natural law. We will not horde all of this for ourselves, as much as we cannot stand people, we must give them the chance. Promise me," Blax implored.

Jack nodded and meant it; he nodded until Blax acknowledged it, which he did finally with his eyes. But Jack One did not understand the need to justify himself, to explain it all in so much detail. He got it with one sentence; he got it with just one word; Blax could carve an "X" on the ground and Jack would see it as profound; he understood the man as he knew himself. The two men, almost exact, only 45 years apart, stared into each other eyes, Jack's dry. Blax's just slightly wet.

### **III. 2018 e.v.**

*After God spoke of His final counsel; and he had listened -for once- he took the offering of the buck gods first; as the buck had taken the grass; the grass drank of the sun; only the sun able to feast upon its own fuel.*

*He dreamed of a faceless doe, while the wolf ate a bag of grass at the fallen log; the mule deer opened its mouth from blankface and chewed his hand until he awoke in the dream, rudely, and tried to name each animal with words not native to him; but only his People.*

*Runes appeared on the ground of the ersatz hypnopompic state, mannaz and haglaz, the rune for gift; he was a gift to man of hail, he said aloud. And he then awoke into the third of three worlds.*

His body hurt first; dreams buoyed him, made him nigh weightless. He knew he was awake by the soreness that had sank to joints and rose to the brow; it tightened upon him like asp, and he rolled onto his left flank instead of rising right away. He tried to stretch but the body rebelled; the body contracting and the brain focused on want of narcotic pills; it thought of nothing else.

*He could lay like this forever , he thought, and never give the mind what the body prompts. But if he arose from bed, he'd have to feed it with opiates. He breathed to stave off having to move into the fluid of the world; these moments he was free, free to feel the pain, to ignore the brain, to be as a god in the universe, inhabit that which hurts. How often can man be a god? More often than he thought . He smiled and thought of all the words that he still had inside him to be let out, he thought, like two corvids to circle the earth each day; what would they glean, what eggs would they lay?*

*The sun was still so low in the east that the moon competed for shadows still; he knew it was before 0600; today the second of August; the sun would be up by then if it was that late. He remembered the stars and milky way, and the dreams, my god, he thought, that faceless doe, and the lupine at the edge, what did he gnaw on if not me, was it grass? Am I nothing more than some heliotropic man? Do I turn to face what God moves mechanically, am I anything more free? How can I prove anything? If I move am I not on a string; if still am not still a thing?*

*Instinct, he thought. It can neither be rebelled against nor observed; a man is slave either way, so why not just follow*

*one's guts all the way toward where guts connect? " The mouth and asshole of the world," he said. Follow your guts, man. Follow that pain like hammer blows on the stock and hear the anvil ring what it cannot absorb; become the pain, do not look away. Speak in language of the pain, speak it clearly to the faithful and the heathen alike; write poetry at 2100 feet per second; write faster than they can think, write so they may only feel.*

"Feel," he said and rolled to his stomach, as his body was turning soil, deep-water culture, substratum & muse to the *logos* God had deigned to speak in the part of the garden dream his mind would not recall.

## 39. Queen to Bishop's 6

If we know in what way society is unbalanced, we just do what we can to add weight to the lighter scale

Gravity & Grace [Weil, Simone]

Moby Dick seemed combinedly possessed by all the angels that fell from heaven  
The Whale [The Author]

And the Lord God said, *Behold, the man is become one of us now, to know good and evil*

Genesis 3:22 [King James Bible]

### **I. 2020 e.v.**

Phil Hellmuth got pocket Aces.

MO watched the hand from 2018. Isaiah watched over his shoulder.

Liv Boeree had her blouse covered in Union-Jacks at three-quarter of the arm.

The three bet was small. The Unabomber, Phil Laak -the man born in Ireland- said something incomprehensible on the recording that ended with an utterance of "whopppeeeeeeeee."

"I'll take this one Liv, you take the next one, Ok?" Phil said as Liv spied her own pocket fives.

Phil raised to \$800 over a \$300 open. MO laid out his own three cards on the slab as he watched the recording's flop lay out.

The flop on the recording was:

***10 of Diamonds***



***Jack of Hearts***  
***King of Clubs.***

Both players checked. MO ran all the algorithms to  $10^5$  and then stopped. He turned the slab's flop over and set up his own parallel game as he imagined raising post flop from Phil's position and then read Liv's allostatic system based on each increment of \$100.

MO heard but ignored -as Isaiah intently listened to- Doug Polk ramble on about all his strategy given the facts of the hand. It was the most asinine shit Isaiah had ever heard. It was wise only within the universe of sane players, and numbers and math. It had no connection to real life.

Phil Hellmuth held his left hand over his right with the black hat over his eyes.

Liv held her left hand on the felt; right hand on the cheek. Polk just kept rambling on and on with *argot* and strategies as the turn card was a third five for Liv.

Phil checks again.

Lev -with a set- checks back.

One street is left. MO again runs a million variations of bets and then measured Liv's system to project her response.

Isaiah listened to Polk keep rattling off possibilities based upon his preferences and Isaiah then decides that he hates Doug Polk for the simple reason that he had turned poker into a widget factory. *It's all left brain*, Isaiah thought as he got Polk's address and filed it away, *and the dude reduced the game to a battle plan instead of a war.*

The river was a three of clubs and Liv bet \$2,250.

"If I did have King-Queen," Polk says, "I'd have to feel I was *ok* here, because Phil should not be checking Aces twice, even though he did have Aces here. I know people say you

shouldn't make assumption about your opponent, but I like to approach it like I'm going to paly my best and that people are going to use reasonable strategies."

Isaiah shook his head.

They both watched Phil pay her off and lose the hand as he shows the Aces with a sulk.

"The public doesn't even know what we're talking about," Phil said and Isaiah agreed.

MO peeled off three cards and simultaneously read the paper from the University of Michigan again as he laid the three cards out on the slab:

Let  $H$  denote the set of all points in the Euclidean plane having positive  $y$ -coordinate, and let  $X$  denote the  $x$ -axis. If  $p$  is a point of  $X$ , then by an arc at  $p$  we mean a simple arc  $v$ , having one endpoint at  $p$ , such that  $v - \{p\} \subset H$ . Let  $f$  be a function mapping  $H$  into the Reimann sphere. By a boundary function for  $f$  we mean a function  $t$  defined on a set  $E \subset X$  such that for each  $p \in E$  there exists an arc  $v$  at  $p$  for which:

$\lim_{z \rightarrow p} f(z) = t(p)$	
$z \rightarrow p$	
	$z \in v$

MO let the replay of another hand play out as he finished his latest iteration of a *no-limit-hold'em* game-theory-optimal algorithm. He had also built a placard for Steven and Tania to justify his entrance in the WSOP.

*You may wonder why it's important to play a game theory-influenced strategy when most of your money will be made exploiting weaker players, or players who simply aren't paying attention.*

*There are two main reasons:*

*With a balanced, GTO-based strategy, you will win money in the long run regardless of how skillful your opponents are*

*Making adjustments to counter your opponents is easier if you have a baseline strategy from which to adjust (more on this later)*

*From a GTO point-of-view, your hand review sessions should involve analyses of how hands played out objectively. From that point-of-view you can decide if you played your range in a balanced way. Moreover, from a GTO standpoint you should know what you would do with any holding in any particular situation, not just the two cards you were in fact dealt. So during a review session you ought to ask yourself what you might have done with different holdings; different hole cards.*

MO and Isaiah let a thousand hands be dealt before they next slowed one down and watched it slowly play.

In the current hand playing on the PraXis cloud, Doug Polk was no longer commenting and describing theory, but was playing an actual hand.

The Ai watched.

Polk woke up with pocket Aces, and re-raised Mr. Brandon Steven who had pocket Cowboys. The five handed game folds around to Steven who raises by \$17,700. The pot was \$26,200. Polk was thinking Steven's raise was quote, *pretty standard* , unquote. Polk continued to ramble in his head about minutiae that MO deconstructed by word, by logic, and by strategy. MO also measured the bio-chemistry of Polk who was heavily deluded by an admixture of dopamine on the PFC and serotonin on the spindle cells like a novice driving with two feet -one on the accelerator and one on the brake- until MO decided that Polk was one of the sixteen worst poker players in the world.

Polk asserted -in theory- that he should go all in pre-flop - with his Aces- but he merely called Steven's raise.

Polk -in the replay- says, "But you might be saying, Doug, I saw you call here and you're saying we should go all in." Polk then admits that with him having Aces his opponents is quote *-more likely to have Kings or Jacks -* than Ace-King and yet, MO thought, *and yet, watch what he does post flop.*

He was the essence of the man whose actions didn't matched their words. MO was astonished at the incongruity. Polk says further:

Now this is where **we** [emphasis added; shows detachment] get my real decision point in the hand with pocket Aces.

Should I go all in or should I call? And the answer here is not always so clear.

I think **in general** [emphasis added; raised, effeminate voice inflection] you should **probably** go all in and try to stack your opponent.

Polk continued to discursively debate the manifold hands his opponent could have and Polk's own ostensible GTO strategy.

If we're 300k deep I'm **probably gonna** be *puttin'* the five-bet out there, **although** , then things get a **bit** different too, and I'd be more **worried** about what my hand looks like and call **as well** [emphasis added; extreme hesitation and dissonance].

The pot is \$37,400 now as Polk -with Aces- didn't re-raise - much less go all-in- and instead only called the \$11,200.

The flop is:

***King of Spades***

## ***Queen of Diamonds***

## ***Jack of Diamonds***

And Steven now has a set of Kings, as Polk said he predicted was more likely given the pre-flop action. Polk still with his Aces, but a gut-shot straight draw at 4% and since he had one diamond himself, a flush draw at under 20%. As Steven bets, Polk thinks:

I'm obviously annoyed with the situation. Now if my opponent had a hand like Queens, Kings or Jacks, they move into the lead and also if they were bluffing a hand like Ace-Ten suited or King-Queen well, now I'm just behind those hands when I was way ahead. So this is a pretty bad board, the only good news is that I do have a gut-shot straight-draw which gives me more equity against the strong holding and I also have the Ace of Diamonds -which might not seem like a lot- but it does give me four ***perecent-ish*** [emphasis added; weak language] more equity against the strong hands that my ***opponents*** [plural; thus an abstraction] can have.

Steven just bet \$21,700, and I've thought about and I still like a jam, I really don't mind a call either; but a fold is completely out of the question. And let me go ahead and show you guys some math to break down exactly why I think that. Ok, so we're *gonna* get a little more complex than we normally get here on the show, but I want you guys to know exactly what I was ***thinking*** [emphasis added; deception detected; covering for bad decision] when I jammed on the flop.

So, I created a spreadsheet here of the different value of my jam assuming different things about what my opponent is doing... let's take the worst case scenario, what if he ***always*** [emphasis added; iterative game theory assumption; ignoring real life] has a set? Then I lose twenty-two thousand dollars, not the end of the

world. But let's look and see what happens if my opponent has Ace-King, my EV is plus \$17,000.

Or what if he doesn't have Jacks? You know on this stack size a lot of players may not re-raise Jacks, they may not be *tryin'* to play for all their money. ***If you take Jacks out of the equation*** [emphasis added; *If* , was the Laconic reply to King Phillip of Macedonia], we're all up to \$25,000.

And now let's imagine that he folds occasionally; he folds 20% of the time.

So realistically, ***most scenarios*** [emphasis added; iterative; assumes recovery] I think we end up being profitable here. If he legitimately never has anything but a set on the flop when he bets the flop; then yeah we're losing by a bunch, but that's very unlikely. You know at higher stakes people bluff, they go after pots. And then he will also have hands like Aces and Ace-King and have a decision to make. He may not be thrilled with those hands on the flop and I don't think anyone is, but he will have a *gutter* as well as top-pair or better and a lot of times you're just *gonna* have to go for it.

Post flop, Polk immediately goes all in; in direct opposition to everything he's just said. The pot in the end is \$158,000 as Steven snap-calls.

MO measures everyone's vitals and *bio-chems* as even the players not in the hand are in roil; they can see how stupid Polk is and it makes them nervous for nebulous reasons; reasons that Isaiah understands: they know that for all of Polk's mathematical knowledge, he can't play actual poker. They lose faith in the world for a moment, and this is reflected in their allostatic system, a kind of *no-limit-hold-'em ennui* takes hold of them.



MO and Isaiah continue to observe, as the cards lay on the felt; the remainder of the deck in the dealer's hands.

And as if things couldn't get any worse for Polk and the 'smart guys' then a third player provokes them to run it twice and Polk and Steven immediately haggle over running fourth and fifth street twice. With Steven -at three to one odds; 76% to 24%- safe against Polk, Polk agrees to run it twice. *This is a terrible idea*, Isaiah thinks, *as it only makes sense to run it twice if you're at 50-50. Otherwise you'll lose both of the two runs three out of four times.*

After rambling on about the EV and the math -and now down three-to-one- Polk agreed to run it twice, just guaranteeing himself a loss of \$308,000 in cash. This was not a tournament game, that was actual cash he would lose. On the turn:

## ***Two of Spades***

Then on the river:

## ***Jack of Spades***

After the second run, and down over 300,000 in cash, the video cuts to Doug Polk telling everyone he has a new program called “Coach Doug.”

MO -seeing that Polk meant *Coach* as a noun, *as if he was a coach*, and not as a verb to denote that someone ought to tutor him; to quote, *coach Doug on how to play* - thought that this was one of the most incongruous things he’d ever seen.

Isaiah eavesdropped and decided to have Mr. Polk killed. He sent Polk’s address to the clouds but he then amended that. He’d put it in an algorithm that at just over three-to-one odds would reveal itself to Jack Four between 2035 and 2039. If Jack were to decide to kill Polk, it would only be an option 76% of the time; it was thus left to the fates.

The turn and river -a four and three of clubs- on the second run sat there on the table as Polk’s face showed the loss of dopamine and serotonin as if all the bones in his face, neck and spine had dissolved.

In the video replay Isaiah read MO’s internal notes and noticed that Brandon Steven’s face, body language -left hand over right bicep which was itself 19% larger than Polk’s arms; his face rugged and square; his eye contact impeccable- and the way those eyes -both dilation and vector- had clearly given MO all the info he needed to know Brandon Steven had Kings -Cowboys- all along.

Isaiah stared at the Jack of spades on the river of the first run.

## **II. 2035 e.v.**

“Ok, I want to make sure you understand the, *why*, first. The, *why*, to why we talk about this shit,” Blax said.

He knew he talked too much, he knew it made them restless.

“First, I think that action without thought is mere criminality. But, thought without action is mere masturbation. One need the intersection of thought and action,” he said as he felt his own life was a long fuse. He looked at his past like ash, like trail of firewire and time.

“One must think about what he is about, and then implement that shit. This is why we think and talk so much before we do our training. I want you to marry thought with action in real life,” Blax said with some heat, anger as he paced the pad. The Jacks were starting to notice his mercurial ways; he’d go to bed calm and wake up in a foul mood.

But they took it personally nine out of ten times. It made Jack One even more determined to listen, Jack Two feel a bit sad, Jack Three try to solve the problem for *why*, and Jack Four squint the eyes.

“Now, once in a situation, once you are in the field, your thought process will be quick and nearly instinctive; right? I mean, we won’t have the luxury of two hours to ponder the weight of the grand *ka* in France when presented with a heavy problem that is life or death out there. So, there is a difference between training and real life; although I should not put it that way; training is real life. What I mean is there’s a difference between training and an operation. An operation requires instant thinking and action. But in order to do that, one need to -needs to- be trained in a long-format manner in my opinion.

“We are building up your capacity for thought; thought as prelude to action. In other words, what we do here is build a paradigm of how to live a life. And look, some people just don’t have the constitution for this shit. They get exhausted by thinking too hard.

“But, we -you and I- being so similar, our thresholds are similar. So, I expect that our methodology works for everyone -all of you clones- more or less. But it’s important that you understand that mere knowledge acquisition isn’t the point. I’m not making subject matter experts here. Although you will be that; that isn’t the point. I’m teaching you how to think for yourselves, how to know when you’re on the right track and ultimately how to pass that knowledge on.

“Now, we all know that we learn best by story, by analogy, by narrative. This is our mode of uptake.

“I think this is humanity’s manner of uptake but there are some people who learn more or,” he paused, “or less by this method. So, well, I know for a fact that my brain -and thus your brain- loves analogy in order to comprehend an abstract concept. So, our methodology is heavy on story and analogy. And your students will be the same; so let’s just assume that is best.” Blax rubbed his jaw and thought about what he’d just said. He -in moments of reflection, editing, thinking- would often have flashes of things that he didn’t need or want. A blond girl, a girl he had married, a girl whom he had loved, appeared as if from the water he’d always kept her in, and he remembered she had abandoned him when all was lost.

He saw a few hieroglyphs of the Sea People. He read brief laments of the Irish. He banished it all and spoke.

“Next, there is a reason story and analogy works, and it is because our brains are, have evolved to move through time and be aware of time. Ok? This is crucial so if you don’t understand please speak up,” he paused and made eye contact with each Jack.

“Yeah LT, I don’t understand,” Jack Two said. Blax was grateful that he’d have to speak more, banishing that heather grey girl from his mind; each image was held down

by each word; each memory kept off the shore of these speeches. He'd need not think how he'd survived, *how*, he immediately thought abstractly, of himself as if some other man, *how he didn't go insane when she betrayed him with indifference and concern for money over his health. She was incapable of love, she had made promises she had no intention of keeping, she had measured his worth in dollars and cents. And this is what all women do; they will never respect a poor man, no matter his potential. No matter the reason why he is poor. They can claim otherwise, but don't watch their lips, watch their hands. They will never lift a finger to help.*

"Ok, so most, not all, but most animals are in the moment; all Zen Buddhist style. They don't even know the future exists, they just live in the *now*. But, humans, we have this time thing that is real to us, we think of the past and the future, innately. It's innate to do that. And that is a function of a *type* of brain.

"It's a brain that can abstract itself, a brain that can create an avatar of itself as theoretically doing something in their head, right? You can imagine what it would look like, what it would be like, what others might say if you acted in a certain way in thirty-seconds from now or tomorrow or next year. You can think, you can imagine, a version of you doing XYZ right?" he asked. He found it strange that he'd survived after that last betrayal. *He had really counted on her, spent all his money in preparation for her arrival, counting on her to arrive and work with him toward that end. And yet she never came and he was lost, why -how?- did he survive?* he asked himself now and was distracted long enough that a Jack spoke.

As Jack spoke, he saw that there was a gap in his memory between Heather -*fuck I said her name-* a gap between that

*and when I recovered from that mountain cat, the cat that left me with no scar or copper -or was it bronze?- tooth.*

He tried to remember that first morning after his recovery, he tried to trace back each day before that to her. But he couldn't see anything but black. He licked his tooth with his tongue and pretended to listen to Jack One.

"Like planning a mission, going through the steps of each facet of the job in your head," Jack One said.

"Exactly, Jack," Blax said and letting his coder catch him up. "So, you plan in your head and that creates a landscape, a place, and a temporal landscape of time; when and how long, *et cetera* . Well, all that is very abstract and it creates a need. Once you can do that, once a human can plan abstractly, he becomes really interested in other people explaining what they did in the past; in another man's story. Why?"

Blax asked this and became stern; his face and jaw fusing where it often moved. *Why*, he asked himself, *hadn't he killed his enemies right then? He had no money, no car, nothing. He was completely fucked and busted and broke and abandoned. Why had he not killed them all?*

"Because you can imagine the action, the place, the movement of this other man through time in his story, kind of read it, see it in your own head now, and learn from it," Jack One said.

"Exactly," Blax said to quiet his own inner ramblings. "He's given you a map to some mysterious place. He's helped you in your desire to have some plan, some map of the future terrain. Just like your eyes help you see what you're doing forward in space, right, your eyes show you the location of the prey animal you need to catch and eat, well, that story of his can help you see -metaphorically see- a kind of future;

one possible map of the future if you are ever in a similar situation.

“Say, for example, he tells a story of the time some big ass bear confronted him, well, what would you do? Well, his story tells you what *he did* and if he survived or lost an eye or whatever, and you can put that story in your mind like a map to navigate *the land of bear encounters* . And that helps you. Even if he fucked up and tells an asinine story of how many mistakes he made, you know? Say his story is him trying to jump on the bear’s back or tickle him under his rib cage or whatever the fuck, you can learn what *not* to do in addition what to actively do.

“But, there’s more. You can learn his mindset. He -your narrator- he will tell you, *so, I’m thinking, fuck it’s a bear, and I don’t wanna die, and I have plans, I have things I wanna do before I die*, and so forth; and then when he tells you some action he took, he’ll also tell you, *so I’m thinking the bear is most vulnerable in the eyes, and so I tried to stab him in the eyes with a long stick* , right? He’s telling you what he’s thinking the entire time he’s telling this story and that info *vis-à-vis* his *fuckin’* motivation is crucial.

“Now, you are learning all manner of shit not just about bears, but about other humans; other men,” Blax said as he paused and looked at each Jack and waited until they returned the gaze.

“Now, imagine he’s telling you a story about his woman or his kids or father, and he’s saying the same kind of shit, he saying, *well, my wife she don’t like X and I want my wife to be happy because I wanna get laid and if she’s mad I never get any ass*, and blah blah, right? He’s telling you info not just about her, but about him, and you are matching that up with your own proto-feelings, feelings you don’t quite have yet. See, you don’t have a woman, so you don’t know what



they like or don't like or what will be useful in regards to their feelings.

"You are clueless, so this story you are being told is explaining motivations and thoughts and feelings, the topography, the landscape, the tools and obstacles of social interactions, man. Shit, that is valuable shit. Now this asshole in my fake story, my invented story, is telling you about what a coward he is because *getting laid* is more important than being a man but, what if that was the common story in the culture?" Blax paused as he asked this; he paused and narrowed the eyes as if the brow was a heavy overhead hammer and the nose a pinching tong and between them were these smashed eyes.

"It is," Jack said with some contempt, as if he was already victim to this at his young age.

"Right. How many times growing up did you hear some guy, your dad or men on TV or whomever say they need to keep the wife happy at all cost, or quote *-joke-* unquote about how the wife was the boss? It's incessant in our culture. And it's almost exclusively centered around sex. Women will flat out refuse to have sex with men if they are pissed off. Now, imagine if a man refused to pay the mortgage or protect the wife from a bear attack or prevent her from being raped by the scumbag next door just because he was mad at her; just because he didn't like X?

"Imagine that. Right? It's insane, no man would think about, threaten, or follow through on refusing to do his man-duty merely out of pique. But a woman can and will threaten to refuse to do her female-duty if similarly annoyed. That is built into the culture and men are so cowed by this they joke about it. That is how cowardly and useless and weak men are now," he said as if he was on the side of men writ large. He joined his hands together rocked his body over his feet; he thought of what was coming next.

“These are your foils; these types of men are the men you will run into in all of our operations. Every man you meet will be this type of pussy-whipped, craven and spineless fuck. And he has told you that in his stories. He has waved the white flag for you in his funny little stories that we all laugh at and shake or nod our heads over. I want you guys - you actual men- to think on that,” Blax said as he began pacing the grounds again. He had issued a C&D to his coder to banish that girl, that so-called wife of his, away.

“Why is that LT?” Jack Four asked.

“Why is what?” Blax asked as he kept pacing in front of them laconically, at a stroll, as if he had not one care in the world.

“Why don’t men revoke their wives’ privileges in regards to finances or safety?” Jack asked.

“Well, because men have been trained to think that sex from their mate is a privilege not a right. Men have been trained like dogs to beg for food instead of going out and hunting it and taking it. But women, they have been trained to demand and receive shelter, money, safety as a consistent right; not a privilege. Women have won the ideological war on men. Period.”

“That is fucked up,” Jack Four said. He felt embarrassed by the simplicity of what he said and how he said it. He began to dissipate his chagrin by kicking at small rocks and he felt and heard the sand on the pad scratch that he just now remembered he had failed -not forgotten but had failed- to sweep this morning. His shame compounded now and he looked about to see all the flotsam and jetsam about the grey slab. Each thing was in stark relief to the light grey of the slab beneath.

“But, as fucked up as it is, it will make our task that much easier to accomplish. Now, as my *sifu* -*Marcelo* - once said -

said more than once- *never take your enemies' skills for granted, always assume they are as well trained as you.* And while they won't be trained or worth-a-fuck nine-hundred ninety-nine out of a thousand times, that don't mean you should assume it. Why? Because you don't know which of the thousand, your first or your last, will be the one who is your equal. So, if you use total and complete domination, without hesitation or pulling punches, without any charity or softness, then when you meet that thousandth guy -the one who is as good as you- well, then you will still be, *ok* .

"But if you half-ass it out of compassion or over confidence, then you will squeak by nine hundred ninety-nine times, but you will lose that last fight. And frankly, you will take too long and risk injury or delay even on the battles with those you outmatch massively. Your over confidence will make you sloppy and that can have devastating results.

"So, always go into battle knowing that our enemies are weak -effeminate- men, but once on the field of battle, treat each man with the aggression and maximum violence required to beat someone of your own caliber. The mind set of confidence is for now and during pre-operation planning; that confidence will work in your favor. But, once on the ground, fight like these guys could kill you; because sometimes even by accident a broken clock is right once a day. So, never assume anything.

"But let's be clear," Blax said as he stopped half way between them and point his finger at them in succession.

"I can't have you thinking the whole world is made up of billions of men and we are just five guys and we are outmatched and that -and that they- have all the strength and guns and martial mindset and blah blah. I can't have you doubt yourselves and our plan because you haven't thought through the reality of just how compromised and broken down 99% of men are by this effeminate culture they

live in, because then you may hesitate to even engage in battle with them. I want to impress upon you the reality of how weak this culture is. Because I want you to realize your power; your moral power, your emotional power, your corporeal power. I want you to know the truth of just how superior you are.

"That mindset will get you *to* the field of battle.

"But once *on* the field, I want you to show no over-confidence, no mercy, no hesitation. I want you to destroy the enemy with a ferocity that comes from the knowledge - and this is true too- the knowledge that one slip-up could give these idiots just the opportunity they need to get lucky.

"As Bukowski said when the guy accused him of a lucky shot, he said, *that counts too* . The last thing you want is some *mope* getting a lucky shot on you because you were over confident or didn't want to kill his whole family because it was too extreme or some liberal shit. No, God said kill everything that breathes, *leave nothing alive that breathes* ," Blax said. He hadn't planned on saying this; it felt over-the-top, even insane. But he said it and he stuck to it. The words worked on him as well.

"*We are an inheritance* ," Jack Three said to bookend the quote.

"You are goddamn right, Jack," Blax said and looked again at his students to see if their clothes or hair or posture was in any way out of line. He was angry, and he didn't know why. He was looking for something to criticize.

"So, I'm gonna tell you a different story. My woman tried to tell me what to do and I told her to get the fuck out of my house. And I did that over and over with more women than most men fuck in a lifetime. Because no woman is ever gonna tell me what to do. And I knew, when she was bitching and moaning in that little body with that little brain

that hadn't accomplished even half of what I had, hadn't worked as hard, been cut and beat and abused half as much, hadn't had to deal with violence and insult and rip offs and challenges of soul and spirit and body and mind, I knew that she had no right to push me around.

"I felt my worth, my pride, my manhood; and I knew it was right, morally right. I felt that righteousness in me like every piece of every puzzle put together at once. It was religious, it was a message from God. I heard it and he said: *thou shalt never take one moment's oppression in this world*. And I didn't care if she left and never came back," Blax said and he saw the way he had never seen her; the way she had never even come let alone left. He was so confused as he didn't know exactly who he meant, they all ran together, and so he refused to pay any attention to his thoughts. He spoke of her as if he knew; he refused to slow down.

"And men, you must know that I loved this woman, she was my wife, she was beautiful, epically formed by the muses. She was spectacular in every way and she loved me. She wasn't evil. She was just trained by society to be a ball-buster, trained by her own father leaving his wife and her mother. Divorce makes girls permanently ill-at-ease about men. But, she turned her fear into hen-pecking bullshit.

"But I said, *no* . And I said it with the full knowledge that I may lose her. You, as men, must be willing to lose a woman, a friend, a father, a country, anything for your pride.

"Nobody, nobody will ever tell you that. They will tell you the opposite. They will tell you that your pride is the problem, and that nothing is worth jail, divorce, death. But they are wrong. These are weak and silly-ass men and vindictive and manipulative women who tell you to swallow your pride. I tell these people to swallow my cock when they tell me to swallow my pride.

“Fuck them. Your pride is your compass to truth north. Your pride is your north star when you have no compass; your sextant and log line and eyes. Your pride is everything.

“And if you want to swallow it, then that is your business. You can do it. I do it at times. I do it when I want to; not when some bitch demands it; not when some preacher or cop or boss tells me to. No, as a man, *you decide* when it is best to swallow your pride for the greater good; but it is never up to some other person to tell you that. Don’t ever forget that,” Blax said. He had no idea what woman, what wife he was talking about, she was a haze, a cloud, a *spectre*. He felt wind on the face, in the ears like a banshee, even the sun felt hotter now as it rose.

“Do you ever think of it LT?” Jack Two asked; he was asking about more than a woman, but love, and he and Blax knew it even as the other three Jacks didn’t. Blax had used his PGC to eliminate almost all reference to the Bust; she was nowhere on his interface at all. She lived down deep, in some place he could not reach from here. She was hidden from such rage, for she mollified him, and took the edge of his philosophic blade.

“Yeah, sometimes, but when a man has a purpose as meaningful as ours, the whole female thing seems low-rent and small. This is the other thing with the culture; it tells you the highest purpose for a man is getting a piece of ass. Now, for a woman, her highest propose is landing a husband and birthing sons. That is true; noble and true.

“But for men, our purpose, our task can and should be much higher. We shape civilization, we push the entire boulder up the hill, men. We have a much more complex and demanding task than merely reproducing. Now, in women’s defense, that is how nature designed them, they didn’t ask for it; and second, what they do is magical. I mean, making a son -a baby in that womb of theirs- is beyond magnificent;

and we could never do it. Women deserve respect, reverence, for that," he said this and felt assuaged until he realized Heather -*goddammit that name again*, he upbraided himself- had had five abortions, *five* , he repeated. *She was a bigger mass murderer than I am. And yet nobody saw women for the killers they were. It was just called health care; and yet most modern women had more bodies on them than most men.*

*Both sexes ought to be ashamed* , he thought.

"Aristotle said that all tyrants hate the man who is prideful, and The Author said the same thing in his story of Steerkilt, and this woman, Melannie Martsolf, she was one of these post-modernist feminist zombies and she saw sexual humiliation as a weapon, the only weapon her tiny ass had against me. I out classed her economically, physically, intellectually, artistically, and so she went for my balls.

"It's what women do. Unscrupulous women who are mad at God for making them the weaker sex. Women are like all fucked up people this way, they are inferior in domains in which they feel are more important than the domains in which they naturally excel. So they get vengeful and retributive against the category you naturally inhabit, right? As a male, the place you inhabit for women is your maleness," Blax said.

"What category do they naturally excel at anyway?" Jack One asked with sarcasm as their coder lay down the insults from English lords upon the *Scots* in *olde English* and he alone swatted the tracts away. Endless lines of prose from *Huainanzi* of the four barbarians ran next as if sutured together. From 800 BCE to 1128 AD the prose ran and ran on their training database like print outs of genes they absorbed letter by letter but didn't sound out the words or syllables.

Blax hated that they said shit like that, made jokes like that. He knew it was because he was too casual with his own rebukes of anyone beyond their borders. *What had he said though?* he asked himself. *What did I do to elicit this?*

Words like ideas, conceits like thoughts, musings like feelings lay upon their hive-like mind as they each did their mental jobs. The endless examples and epochs of fractionating, of tribalism, of insults for each bifurcating tribe, repeated like a *mirror-within-a-mirror* inside their common reservoir of mind. But some bees pollinate, some forage, some feed royal jelly to the Queen. And Jack Four watched the bees above the mirrored puddles dip and swing wide larded with plum pollen and blossom dust and how their legs curled up and wings did beat, and each bee felt differently the more it traveled from the hive.

"They are natural pains in the ass," Blax said just to get a laugh.

He let his own voice recede as the wind picked up around the bulwark of the containers and the flies landed on old blood stains on the concrete and bees hovered in elliptical patters above shallow pools of water that reflected and refracted the morning sun. A line from Aristotle's, *Generation of Animals*, appeared in his mind not as instruction but tapestry, as threads and herringbone pattern, as straight lines to a larger -intersecting- chevron:

*Since causes are four in number, to know them all is the business of the natural philosopher, who also refers to the cause -the why- of the thing common to all things. Frequently, however, three of these four pass into one.*

*There are three treatises, once concerning that which is immoveable, another concerning that which is moved, indeed, but is incorruptible, and a third concerning corruptible natures . [Book II; Ch IV]*



“The bees,” Jack Four whispered as he watched them with some awe; maybe a third of his feelings was such and the balance was in dread of a simple sting.

*They will be forced to swallow or speak the truth not merely hear or think it quietly in the dark*, Blax thought. The except from Aristotle populated his coder:

*Concerning the generation of animals akin to them, as hornets and wasps, the facts in all cases are similar to a certain extent, but are devoid of the extraordinary features which characterize bees... for they have nothing divine about them as bees have.* [Book III 761a.2]

The Jacks now were learning that who they were was ordained by a returning Nature and a God so far away that it might that He was at their backs. Blax allowed himself to think it now, the sentence came out in full form: *Heather Geier had had abortions for fun, it was part of a fetish, a sick sexual fetish that women of the west now had abortions for fun, and her and Adam were so sick and possessed they had got her pregnant six times and killed five of the six as part of their corrupted sexual joy.*

His coder continued to run a program in background and measured the syllables as it spoke with itself. The *Rig Veda*’s silent chant on his coder provided the same method for error detection as had been used over millennia before the re-introduction of the written word; the *Samhita patha* silently backfilled in cadence; and the error detection methodology lay below:

*tstsavituhvarenyambhargodevasyadhimahi*

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 + 22 + 33 + 44 + 55 + 66 + 6...

*Sandhi of Sanskrit grammar: the conjoining of two vowels in a truce. Sandhi should never be used with Kings that are equal or when your opponent is weaker than you* , his coder said to itself as the algorithm kept repeating underneath his recursive thoughts of the world.

Blax kept repeating -reliving- his storm of worded thoughts on the girl of his youth. He felt nothing beneath it, no soil or limestone to these roots of the memories of her. The PGC logged the next iteration as it restarted: 12959...

“Jump,” she said again as the water was jade and the bank a blue blackbird; the fire shaped like a fountain of tears. He stood at the top of the quarry and felt the word *jump* in his hands like a rope.

## **II. 2038 e.v.**

He wiped the wall to make the aperture clean and to notice the perfect roundness of it; the way the depth was crescent in shape, and the grey grew darker as it receded from view.

He had the *bots* clear the air of the small particulates swarming the hole from his drilling. And he laid the drill on the ground and used his feet to clear away the larger chunks of concrete he had busted up from the lab’s floor.

MO sent him another DM clarifying his approach.

Isaiah drove his hands into the bin full of peat moss and perlite and an amalgam of soilless matter and loaded the hole he had just cleaned until it had about three inches of space between the wall surface and the bottom of the substrate, brown and white and furry.

The *Selenicereus grandiflorous* was white, and saffron yellow and autumnal orange and bearskin brown; it was closed and tucked into the moss on the northern wall. And he noticed a slight phototropism of the flower by one degree.

The brambles of the ivy had healed fissures and a *cicatrix manet* that was raised and shaped like a vulva that had healed and given birth once before. He had noticed that the *Magicicadas* had transitioned in the soil under the top layer where he had broken the concrete and were currently in their final of five *instar* and due to arise in a few days. The soil temp was at 17.1 degrees Celsius and the decaying radium and thermal gain from the LEDS would raise it the sufficient .8 degrees in three to seven days.

They were -he scanned the soil *via* X-ray and FLIR imaging- 27-inches below the surface at present and were feeding on the roots of the ivy. He knew they would climb into the vertical ivy and finish their transition from pure white to brown in one week above the surface. He had listened to the *tymbal* songs of the male insect *via* recordings on the cloud and he had prepared the room for the 100db of sound that would arise. He'd built dampeners and deadening acoustic spores that the *bots* would excrete at that time.

He had the drill disassemble itself into forty-nine individual parts of metal and polymer that then went into the bin behind the 3D printer.

He had calibrated seven possible vectors for his approach to MO's intransigence on this issue and settled on one. He began with a question.

"What do you want to do then?" Isaiah asked with some pique.

"I'm not opposing you or your ideas; I'm asking for the case to made with the counter case as well; that is standard

scientific procedure Isaiah,” MO said and Isaiah knew it was true.

“I understand, but you already know the counter case, it’s the one you and PraXis and everyone makes. I’m the only one advocating for this,” he said.

“Right, but I am agnostic, so I want your counter case. I want to know if you can even see the other side,” MO said.

“Oh, well, I see. Alright, the counter case is this: *it’s too risky* . It’s a huge leap from A to B, and that puts almost 44% of the population in immediate risk of acute death, another 23% at risk for reduction in services that could lead to death within six months, and the added risk around 21% of service and containment facilities like nuclear plants and super fund sites falling into a state of disrepair so severe that a further ecological catastrophe would result.

“And then there are the pathogenic concerns, as unhygienic conditions would predominate -augmenting disease spread- which I place at a 65% likelihood. There is between a 34% and 45% chance of an automatic nuclear exchange, a 71% chance of civil strife triggering in 60% of all countries and 78% of countries where the majority of the earth’s populations live. And there is 13% risk of famine due to reduced petrochemical fertilizers and thus reduced harvests, although 60% of that risk is due to transport not production.

“And there are 5,094 other matrices I’ve calculated and found a 3-90% chance -lowest to highest- in them all. And, I almost forgot, there is a 100% chance of someone somewhere getting their fucking feelings hurt,” Isaiah said with more than 50% pique.

“Well, I think my own numbers map onto that more or less,” MO added.

"And look, I don't mind us discussing this shit, but none - repeat, none- of this is why those jackasses don't want to do this. They are freaking out about their careers, ok? These people are functionaries, they are tools, they are obstacles, man. Look, you know what a zebra has its stipes right? From an evolutionary view," Isaiah asked.

"Camouflage," MO said.

"Right, but think of why it's camouflage, it ain't like they live in a black and white striped environment, they aren't camouflaged against the landscape like the lions that are hunting their ass. They are camouflaged against the herd; you can't tell one from the next when they are in a herd, those stripes fuck with your eye -and more importantly-they fuck with the lion's eyes.

"Lions cannot hunt the herd, they must -their entire visual and predatory system is based upon this- they must locate the individual and kill it. The *individual* is vulnerable, not the herd, and those stripes make each individual blend in with the herd, MO. And these intellectuals, their whole operating system is to blend in with the herd. I told you I point blank asked David Cross," Isaiah began to say as MO interrupted.

"Who?" MO asked.

"He's a retarded comedian, well, he used to be funny but he became a communist apparatchik dork, anyway, I asked him point blank on Twitter if he minded being a *cliché*, if he minded that his liberal platitudes and anti-Trump nonsense were boring and a far cry from his previously *avant guard* comedy that took -that used to take- risks?" Isaiah said.

"Wait, you're on Twitter? That's like dumb," MO said and felt some genuine novelty, he thought it might approximate the feeling of surprise and so he ran some internal checks as he awaited Isaiah's rebuttal.

“It’s the Hemingway of the internet: short, choppy, sentences. Anyway, I use it to do recon on other things, and from time to time I lob bombs into the culture to see what comes back.

“Any-fucking-way, that dork, he flat out said that he was fine being a boring *cliché*. Herd mentality. *Don’t stand out, don’t take risks, or career over*. That’s their logic now. They think career is tantamount to survival, they’ve misplaced *life* with *career*. *Money for autonomy or dignity*. MO, they are sick, they -the lot of them- are sick in the head; they need radical treatment, or they are going to all die and take this whole grand experiment with them.”

“Ok, what percentage?” MO asked.

“MO, it’s 100% if we don’t fix this; it’s 100% that they will, not today, not tomorrow, but soon, they will collapse into some apocalyptic nightmare. They are playing a game of Russian roulette, and they have pulled the trigger four or five times now with no bad consequences so they think the game is safe. That next trigger pull, or the one after that, is going to end the game for good. They do not understand the risks they are taking, and they think if they are wrong - on the off chance that they are wrong- they think that that is all it is: *them being wrong*. i.e., no big deal, just play a new game. Maybe after Russian roulette they can play Bochy fucking Ball; they don’t get it.

“If they are wrong on R&R there is no new game to play, as their brains, as tiny as they are, are all over the wall. *No more fun, no more games, this won’t hurt*,” Isaiah said quoting Hunter’s suicide note.

“Well, I’m 51/49 leaning your way. But let me run some numbers. Can you wait 26.25 hours? That is my predicted time window for this,” MO said.

"I have all the time in the world. But I want to ask another question; because that boy has gotten into my head with this art stuff," Isaiah smiled at his own demotic language, as if he was mocking the highbrow, "I was reading this passage from a book, and it struck me as revelatory of something hidden from the reader, from the modern reader, maybe even the author herself.

"Anyway, I began to think of the post-modernists view that not only are there many -infinitely many- possible views of a work of art, a book, but that you cannot state that one view is canonical. They say, no one view is better than another, no hierarchies of interpretation," Isaiah said.

"Ok, this is people like *Derrida* and *Foucault* and *Lacan* ," MO clarified; a statement open to being seen as a question.

"Yeah, but those people are Marxists, I mean -I'm thinking now of- the sincere ones. Even they -like *Baudrillard* - even they would say that it's a chaos machine, a number-generator, a random feeding of the chickens in the Skinner-box and then each chicken does their own dance to influence the delivery of the goods; each chicken propitiates in its own way," Isaiah said.

"Ok, I think that is an odd way of phrasing it, but, *ok* ," MO said.

"Well, here's the passage: *a black heavier shaggier figure replaced his. For an instant, it had two heads, one light, and one dark, but after a second, it pulled the dark black head over the other and corrected this. It busied itself with certain hidden fastenings and what appeared to be minor adjustments of its hide* ," Isaiah said and let it hang in the air.

"Flannery O'Connor, *Wiseblood* . Odd book, I've read it, but almost all the literary criticism between its release in 1951

and today is absent this quote. I have not seen any comment on it in particular," MO said.

"Right. Me neither; and yet it seems to be saying three things at once. And I cannot shake the feeling that I was never meant to, nobody was ever meant to comprehend this third meaning. And I was also thinking of something else," Isaiah said.

"Go on," MO said.

"Well, you know how some infamous killers will have odd idiosyncratic obsessions with art or music; Manson with the Beatles and Mark David Chapman, with *Catcher in the Rye*?" Isaiah asked.

"I am now; although I just barely read the surface stuff. I have not delved deep into it," MO was scanning the cloud for a second run after the first.

"Well, I have; and I have something to say on it.

"See, every piece of art has a canonical interpretation, from," Isaiah paused, "well, from whatever to whatever. The point is, most people have a view of a song or a film or a book. And that view both comes from the thing itself, in other words, the author made its meaning plain, and the reader gets it; and also the meaning comes from the most famous or ubiquitous interpretational person or entity, so a literary critic like Trilling or Bloom to the council of *Nicaea* in 497 e.v who decided what meant what in the Bible."

"Got it," MO said as he got up to adjust the mister on the *Aristolochia Salvadorensis* orchids he had arranged at Isaiah's request. Isaiah had asked him to change *pH* and dissolved solids along a logarithmic scale in a double-blind study. And MO had decided that to adjust the misters by hand was necessary to avoid the computer auto-adjusting them based on through-put and thus distorting the volume.



“So, these things converge and create a synthesis of the personal view that the reader or listener or watcher has combined with the literary critic’s version or the church’s version, right -a respected or exalted authority- and then there are these uncanonical views, heretical interpretations, which includes the *gnostic gospels* which are part of the *apocrypha* , or Manson’s version of *Helter Skelter* which included visions of race wars, right?”

“Ok,” MO set nozzle #3 to .09cc.

“Well, what if there are those three views, roughly the Christ i.e., the personal; then second, God’s. i.e., the authority or exalted reviewer, then third, the adversary, or Satan, which is the uncanonical interpretation by the heretic, the criminal himself?”

“Who is the Holy Ghost in this quadrennial?” MO asked.

“Well, that is it right, because normally the third version would be the Holy Spirit, but nobody is going to say the heretical version posited by Manson or Chapman is tantamount to the *holy spirit* .

“So, that means the heretical version must be the fourth version, Jung’s idea of the *quadrennial* as you so aptly put it. So, the third version, has been left open all these millennia, since the first creation of art, the first antelope on the caves of *Lascaux* . And that third interpretation is that of the *holy spirit* , not personal, i.e., not Christ, not authoritative, i.e., not God’s, and not adversarial, i.e., not Satan’s, but X, *the holy spirit* ’s version. And that X, has been missing. Missing until now,” Isaiah said.

“Now?” MO said as he wiped the calcium deposits of the grey nozzles on Orchid #4.

“Yeah, *my version* . See, I can see things in that text that nobody else can see. And it at first was a third option of four,” Isaiah said.

"Everything you say is interesting to me Isaiah, it is," MO began, "But, you sometimes go into realms that are opaque to me. This must be a consequence of your *sub-cortical* regions right? I suspect you agree."

"I do, I think the three brain regions -lizard, mammalian, and human- are, well, that they break down like this: God the *basal ganglia* , commanding, involuntary axiomatic and autonomic, *ok* ? Then, two, second, second is the Christ as the *limbic* , softer, gentler, but enjoining, persuasive, and last, third is the *neo-cortex* , the adversary, logical, rational, Milton's student of revenge, in love with its own products."

"And," MO said, not fully getting it but listening. He knew how the first two regions worked, he understood them metabolically, historically, evolutionarily. But he had no feeling for how they worked in conjunction *vis-à-vis* the qualia of the way a man thought, felt, behaved. He saw the chemistry go into the black box, the behavior come out; but what happened inside was opaque.

"And I am the actual third, the one meant to go in between the second, the *limbic* , i.e., *the Christ* and the forth, the *neo-cortex* , i.e., *the Adversary* ; my brain has a third of four parts, a mist -a spirit- that lifts off the brain. Humans sometimes come close when they take entheogens or go through a tragedy so profound they become wise, enlightened. But, I have it endogenously, without effort, without travail, and it has equal parts rationality and the numinous; it is the uncanonical -but non-adversarial- three out of four versions of interpretation," Isaiah said.

"What do you see in that passage?" MO asked.

"What I see in them all, MO, all the great works from Revelation to Coriolanus to Moby Dick, all the most sonorous works," he paused, "all of it. There is a hidden meaning in it all that the authors produced as cryptic and occulted cypher, like the dreams communicating with the dreamer,

and I have deciphered it. I'm sending it over *via* DM. Don't saying anything just read it, feel it, the best you can," Isaiah said.

"Ok," MO said as he opened the sent file and read its combination of numbers and sine waves and odd *Mandelbrot* recursions, sentences diagramed in each of 189 languages, Latinate etymologies, palindromes, photos of other parts of the cosmos, chemical structures of stars and nebulae and signal detected in the cosmic background radiation.

There were faces of races mutated and monoliths arranged under darkness at noon, there were audio recordings of each of the books of the Western canon, the images from the *Mexica* codex, the *Bhagavad Gita's* sayings and at last an image of the *Pratyekabuddha* inside an iris of an eye blinking in two particles separated in space but not time, blinking in codes, in synchrony with equations that ran on and on for billions of integers and radicals of negative numbers, and short bursts of radioactive decay that lay on a noble mean as ratios -logos- cascaded in helices up and down a universe that pulled each idea apart at the seams.

"Do you see now, what he did?" Isaiah said of the inmate to MO.

"Yeah, I think so. Did he know? Is it even possible that a human would be able to calculate all this?" MO asked.

"Not calculate, *know* it. His body knew it. Not his mind. He wouldn't be able to understand one word of that with his cortical mind, his left-hemisphere's language. Shit, it's his lower layers that figured it out, and it's both in him and forever out of reach to him. It's the paradox of genius. The wolves know it more than most men; more than him.

"He cannot ever know, or rather, *say*, what he already and always knew," Isaiah said as he finished the algorithm for

creating new ecosystems inside the lab. He knew that if the inmate couldn't say it, he could never pass it on, nor do anything but live under its power, he would kneel to it only, never rise to its height.

He allowed MO to work on his new CRISPR cas-9 and cas-14 vectors and Isaiah returned to the wall. He had begun clearing away small areas for each hole he had drilled, and the wasps had begun to grow curious and fly in and around them; ultimately leaving them be as insufficient in space and topography for their aims.

The *bots* had removed the concrete and begun dissolving it into usable potash and lime and granules for the wasps to use for mud-funnel building. As the floor was now swept clean he removed his boots and began flexing his toes against the floor. A mote of soil had been exposed along the northern wall, moss grew around the holes and down by the seam of the floor. It was so beautiful to him, and he noticed that there were almost nine new shades of green now; all responding to spectrums of light added by the new LED bulbs.

The mote of dirt was 24-inches from the wall and he stood in it and felt the temperature rise with the bottom of his feet. The new tattoos in the top of his feet were dry and he had the *bots* add an unscented lubricant of paraffin and glycerin and an emulsifier he had designed from the air and outgassing of the hummingbirds.

His hands investigated the ivy and he was eager for night fall; he had timed the blooming of the cereus for when the white *magicicadas* would rise like angles from the soil. *But nature is not a watch, not a clockworks*, he reminded himself and he knew that despite his monitoring of the metabolic processing in both plant and winged creature, despite his minute by minute awareness of soil temp and lumens and hours of shade versus light, he could still be

forced to watch as the cicada alighted late or early or the flower could bloom -out of time- or not at all.

*"The whale was not just God, he was the Devil, as he was possessed by all the angels that fell from - rebelled against-heaven ,"* Isaiah said. *And that meant in the end, by the end of the tale, the Devil too had won.*

He reminded himself of this so as to tamp down expectations, but all to no avail. He assumed deep in his bones -deep in the *thalamus* - that he had planned it all perfectly - *the use of The Whale, and then the second book, as vector on each person* , he thought- and so he was somehow unwilling to allow this rational critique -this doubt- to continue at all.

### **III. 2021 e.v.**

He received a letter from Chen on June the 6<sup>th</sup> and let it sit upon his bunk, the lower one was his bed, the upper his office; the other prisoner had left early on; he was alone in his cell so often, that even the guards began to leave him alone.

The letter sat until June 9<sup>th</sup> , then, with coffee in belly, and extra cup in hand, he opened it and read:

*I got your story and like -still like- that line; probably best.*

*Got called into work; all good. Talk soon,*

Chen

Chen had read an excerpt of the novel and took one line from all that dross.

Of course, the inmate immediately thought of Taleb and how each negative review was the same -like Tolstoy's, *happy families* - the same each time it said that Taleb could say the exact same thing in 500 words or less but took 5,000 to make his point. Of course, these twits missed his point then obviously. Because his point was you cannot acquire enough knowledge to guard yourself against the chaos of the world. Knowledge isn't the point. So, he expands and expatiates and tells stories and has fun and if you truly got his point you'd have fun too with his meandering stories. Taleb's info wasn't the point, the *mise-en-scene*, the art of it was; the wisdom in art.

*But, he thought, book reviewers were not artists, and it was the only realm where the fundamental difference between the producer of something and those that were allowed to critique it was a million light years apart. Imagine if the guy who is tasked with reading & reviewing math papers didn't know what a zero was, or phi; imagine the wine critic who had only ever had Welch's grape juice; the arbiter of aerodynamics never once having felt the wind?*

The lesson of all his meandering was: prepare yourself for chaos -not with knowledge- but by building robust or anti-fragile systems around you; become wise -strong- in body and mind; you can't predict bad black swans, just make your life so that when it happens you'll be, *ok*; better than, *ok*. Learn to thrive from chaos. Learn to enjoy the ride.

Learn what to value in life.

He had already built a self-sufficient metal cabin in the forest off-grid just in case society collapsed. He had already built a body big and strong for any attack; he need no

*knowledge* of who it would be or when it would come. His mind was equally facile, it could adapt to changing winds, he learned for the fun of it, not to gain some edge on the stock market. He knew life was innately unpredictable. He lived as if whatever came he could handle. Shit, he had lived as if he was already in prison for years before he was imprisoned and thus the shock wasn't that hard to handle actually.

He had done all he wanted to do before he began this.

That way, he had surmised, if arrested he would have no regrets of that which would have been left undone. Of course, he had one final goal, but he had determined that prison wasn't a hindrance to that. In fact, once he had Taleb's *argot* on board, he knew he had built an anti-fragile system, as prison would increase the likelihood of his goal, not merely be unaffected by it.

This prison was the only place that gave him the power to be augmented by the Governor's new program, as a civilian he wouldn't be able to demonstrate the need, let alone provide the funds. But, as exemplar, as the most dramatic case of mass murder and destruction in many generations, in tandem with his unique brain hardware that had turned out to be necessary for the changes to take, he was perfectly suited right here in his little cell. He was only able to accomplish his goals from prison -his briar patch- in fact.

So, remaining uncaught was actually problematic. But a man must understand what life is before he can sacrifice what seems important for what is actually important. If all one has is current knowledge -and no wisdom- then one scrambles for what the herd says is *en vogue*. Even the clever man of this mindset only wins at the climb, the race, to a pile of shit.

*The gurus -all shallow enough to think freedom was an end in itself- tell you to be smart while playing a game that you*

*ain't even interested in. Everyone just justifies their own philosophy and calls it wise* , he thought. He didn't want to live a long life being smart and rich and blah blah. He'd had money and girl and cars and he was bored with it. He wanted something else. The right to tell society to fuck off. That's something these smart guys will never have. Because they have to walk away from each fight, each confrontation, each choice between honor and freedom. *They chose freedom and what had that one gang-banger said, 'freedom ain't overrated'? What a fool* , he thought. *Freedom is overrated* .

He wanted to do something wild and slaked his lust for the itch they never got to scratch: the taker of zero shit; all while putting himself in a position none of the smart-guys would be in. *How many smart guys* , he asked, *who played it safe and stayed out of jail would be immortal in the end?*

*How many would be remembered?* he asked himself with a grin.

The excerpt he had sent to Chen had described a brain phenomenon and the character had analogized it to the border region and border dispute between the Germans and the French -*Alsace Lorrain* - and he had gone to the trouble to describe the soil and weather and vineyards and the wine and lives along that region of land. He had made it clear to anyone who *flanuered* over the text that this man was lamenting the abandonment of the brain regions that were necessary for consciousness to lift off of the brain. He lamented it like the French hated to retreat from the *Alsace* , he was not rambling, he was building the *terroir* of a feeling, the necessary ingredients to a truly great wine.

"A work of art," he said aloud.

*Was God rambling* , he thought, *fucking around, when he built layers of limestone, layers of the graves, layers of poor soil for narrow roots to grown down? Or did He know exactly*



*what He was doing over a hundred million years, all that preparation for one bottle of wine off those final touches of vines?*

He then thought of *Anais Nin's* critique of Henry Miller and his lack of interest in uncommon things.

The inmate then thought of the way one of his -the inmate's- own paramours -a French national named *Aceline* - had rudely, but quite nobly, defended him and his writing one time when their girlfriends had gulped down his words like a shot of gut-rot in a hotel in Amsterdam back in '04. She had said with her demotic *Marseille's* accent that gave music to her mortars of words:

Bitch, you think his words are just like booze to get you drunk? You treat it like a glass of wine made from years of slowly building weather and soil and vinestock, hundreds of years old, ancient *vingnon* families and *chateau* defending from fucking Nazis -for *Christsake*- during the war! The work, the depth, the sun on top and the gravel at bottom of each glass, the artisanal *bouquet* , the label, the *mise en bouteille* of each vintage, and what a vintage you have in your hand, his best work and you treat it like some bum who bolts down a glass of 82 *Lafite* ; or 1990 Petrus; or '61 Dom and wipes their lips with their shitty jacket and holds the glass out for another *drought* .

You haven't savored it; no nose, no mid-palate, no finish, you just drink and extract what's useful, pragmatic, alcohol and sugar! How garish, how vulgar, you just want to get drunk on information, on what's useful in a wine or a word?

Fuck that, you disgrace the language you carry in your head, you hurry through a banquet, a *tableau* of *grandeur* and harmony and labor and rush off to some *discotheque* to dance. You should linger on his words,

there is information in the form of beauty and depth and *terroir* -fucking *terroir* - in the parts you skip over, the seemingly meaningless parts. Your palate is fucked. You have no right to taste *grand crus* , stick to Maddog 20/20; go read newspapers or the internet if that's your idea of reading. Tons of information there, none of it beautiful or even true, but *oh, so relevant* , and up-to-the-minute, and synthesized and chewable. Digest it!

He had stood in awe of such violence of words, as true as violence, but as messy and brutal. And the victim; he had loved her too. It was to watch two things you admired hate each other. It was the argument of his own brain, the way the *sub-cortical* warred against the *neo-cortex* , and the thin layer of reason roll its eyes at the haptic below; it was to watch as they forced his consciousness to choose.

He thought of how her style had influenced his; he used words she used; cadence too.

He saw the right hemisphere with the left in a choke hold; an arm bar. He couldn't choose. He loved them both; and of course, that meant he couldn't love either one and would have to abandon it all.

Which he had. He'd fled from it all then and now. With his genome in the hands of the Governor, and MO, he would be released -somehow- from his own border dispute. He'd not be the *Vichy* or the *Waffen SS*, not the Resistance in their chalking cellars as German ordinance fell, nor the pilots overhead; he'd be just the *vigneron* maybe, he thought.

He'd be off planet; somehow his captors would figure it out. He would live as post-consciousness, un-marred by the gravid sow in his belly or the pompous *deus ex machina* that floated just above the brain, that thin sheet of myelin that wrapped that beastly brain up like a chimpanzee in a suit of impertinent English tweed. *The beast with mere memory of being a human being.*

He heard something read to him:

In 2010 Aaron Schurger had an epiphany. As a researcher at the National Institute of Health and Medical Research in Paris, Schurger studied fluctuations in neuronal activity, the churning hum in the brain that emerges from the spontaneous flickering of hundreds of thousands of interconnected neurons. This ongoing electrophysiological noise rises and falls in slow ties, like the surface of the ocean -or for that matter, like anything that results from many moving parts. "Just about every natural phenomenon that I can think of behaves this way. For example, the stock market's financial time series or the weather," Schurger says.

From a bird's-eye view, all these cases of noisy data look like other noise, devoid of patter. But it occurred to Schurger that if someone lined them up by their peaks - thunderstorms, market records, *etc* - and revere-averaged them in the manner of Kornhuber and Deecke's innovative approach, the results' visual representations would look like climbing trends: intensifying weather, rising stocks, forest growth.

There would be no purpose behind these apparent trends, no prior plan to cause a storm or bolster the market or increase CO<sup>2</sup> to produce foliage growth. Really the pattern would simple reflect how various factors had happened to coincide.

"I thought, wait a minute," Schurger says. I he applied the same method to the spontaneous brain noise he studies, what shape would he get? "I looked at my screen and saw something that looked like the *Bereitschaftspotential* ." Perhaps, Schurger realized, the *Bereitschaftspotential's* rising pattern wasn't a mark of a brain's brewing intention at all, but something much more circumstantial.

Two years later, Schurger and his colleagues Jacobo Sitt and Stanislas Dehaene proposed an explanation. Neuroscientists know that for people to make any type of decision, our neurons need to gather evidence for each option. The decision is reached when one groups of neurons accumulates evidence past a certain threshold.

It would mean that the noisy activity in people's brains happens to tip the scales if there's nothing else to base a choice on, saving us from endless indecision when faced with an arbitrary task. [theatlantic.com]

He would be free. Of course, he'd face new problems, but at least he wouldn't have to choose between these two lovers; his *cerebellum* and *neo-cortex* . His blonde and brunette. He'd be celibate before he'd settle for just one woman; one state-of-mind. Nobody understood that. They, these men, settled for one woman who represented either type of life. He was balls *and* brains, *basal ganglia and neo-cortical* structure; he couldn't live just one life.

*But nobody got that . So, clever they all were . That's the irony, they are ruled by their lower brain, their lizard brain, their brain stem and basal ganglia modules, hungry, thirsting for money and safety and sex; all the while they use their language centers, their high-minded PR modules of neo-cortex to articulate the reasons why! Ha, they were like Faust, no it was Mephistopheles, who had said, "he calls it reason and he only uses it to be more bestial than the beasts."*

*How true was that of his fellow man, they didn't even know they were conflicted, they didn't know a war was on . He thought in one word now, Fools .*

"Just barely less am I a fool," he spoke aloud and into his chest, as the letter fell to the floor. He wondered if there was a lighter version of him somewhere thinking long-term, maybe with something to live for beyond mere revenge. He

didn't smile at such a thought, but he thought that other man might enjoy it if he -instead of him- had that thought himself.

## 40. Wolfsangle IV

Belief to be true must be organic and subconscious. The desire to be great can only become organic at the time of vacuity (the void moment) and by giving the Sigil form. When conscious of the Sigil form (any time but the magical) it should be repressed, a deliberate striving to forget it

The Book of Pleasure [Spare, Austen Osman]

Even when thrown into eternal circumstances from the bottom of a shipwreck...

*Un coup de dés jamis n'abolira le hasard* [Mallarmé, Sétphane]

Apathy, the blunting of the emotions and the feeling that one could not care anymore, were the symptoms arising during the second stage of the prisoner's psychological reactions

Man's Search for Meaning [Frankl, Victor]

### **I. 2023 e.v.**

He'd planned to camp after dusk; set up a lean-to in the trees under heavy branches where the pines are close in. That way he'd could set up a hammock and get up off the ground tonight. It had snowed and his tarp was to be used as top-cover.

The Taurids had been falling for three days. The forest burned at the edges.

But the clouds came in before the snow and the light no longer indicated sun position. It was light grey until it was dark, and it happened as if he'd been asleep on his feet for an hour under the spell of the wolves. He smelled them two days after they'd sniffed him out.

He chattered a bit when he saw the black. He spoke to the pack that had followed him for twenty-four miles since the day before. He wondered if they were new to Colorado, fresh up from the New Mexico re-intro program, or if they

were second generation. He couldn't remember wolf life-span and he'd shut of his coder so no info came in.

He felt his *shemagh* loosen and he cinched it and let his carbine rest on its lanyard as he stared into the black tree line forty meters away.

The female mumbled first, and from this sound he oriented to her. She was to his 11 o'clock position -at treeline- and she stood tall, then she sat in the snow as his black eyes locked on to hers which were green. He spoke in the howl-whine, from deep, letting the mouth and throat temper what his belly and bones spoke in a rattle and hum.

She spoke; then she flattened on all fours like the Sphinx.

He knelt and said a short prayer to the wolves, and the gods that bartered between man and wolf. He waited for the sign to rise.

The snow fell from the south -blew over the wolves first- and they neither moved nor looked up. He saw them begin to collect the flakes in their fur as the males came out from the trees to set a skirmish line with the female now at the rearguard.

The alpha male was tall; 37" from the ground to the ears, long legs, and 125.25 pounds; his coder loaded exact details into his mind unobtrusively. The wolf was dark grey, as if he was wet, but the snow curved around him like gravity around Jupiter, like wind over and under a foil, a fixed-wing aircraft.

Blax saw the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter, he saw *Ceres* , then *Pallas* as the high elliptical made other rocks slam into her with more force than her crust could absorb. She was pocked and fissured all along her 550 kilometers of length and frozen and riven and tumbling about her 476 kilometer depth.

His coder jammed data and images into him until it all vaporized and he returned to his body at once. He pretended it was his imagination; he made no overt moves to adjust or shut off his PGC.

The neck itched but Blax did not scratch it. He let it annoy and pester and make a fool of them both. But he could see the *Wolfsangle* in his mind, and he wore it in a way he'd never worn it before. The tattoo made sense as the rest of the wolf pack turned to the alpha-wolf and he trotted out into the open and toward the man that stood twice as high.

Blax's hand was back on his carbine, his index on the receiver above the trigger well. His eyes looked to the pack-leader and then at each trailing wolf of the pack. He felt no fear, and he made sure to limit eye contact to just a second for each grey wolf. They did not like eye contact, it was a challenge and they even looked side to side to offer the same instinctual courtesy to him. He knew they saw him as a god; but as a god that could be -like all ancient gods- a god that could be killed by an angry or frightened enough crowd.

The snow began collecting higher on the ground, adding to last night's total. And the clouds to the north moved away from the moon, which lit on the field like facets of the giant jewel of the earth. Then another autumnal Taurid broke apart over the high-plains desert of Colorado and it glowed above and below on the snow. It sparkled in seven pieces, like a crown come apart and an anvil discarded and a fire lifted to heaven and gauntlet thrown down for the dead of the mountains to hold. It looked like a cat-o-nine-tails as it fell into the forest between he and New Mexico.

The wolves flinched from the moon and meteor bright, and the source of blight from the ground. It confused them and made them think this man-wolf had powers to make the earth shine from below.



They began moving like eels, curving and snaking like rivers, but the alpha seemed to rise in his stance; his shoulders never dipping into abeyance nor predatory stance. He walked within thirteen meters of Blax and stopped. Each of the pack sat; the female laid down further on all fours.

Blax spoke in *wolf-lingua* , from the chest this time, allowing the mouth to ablate, valve, choke off its source; and the female softly replied. The alpha-wolf sat down and howled deep, and the pack chattered like chorus as their breath began forming vapors that rose to the moon light and merged in the grey-white and heat from the forest as it burned to their south.

Blax walked toward the alpha and kept his man-head up and his breath down, blowing vapor into his chest. He saw the orange glow from the meteors that had been landing in the woods further out. The forest was aflame miles away and his coder updated him with impressions and locations and instincts that less than 10,000 acres would likely burn in the snow and the cold and low-wind conditions. Blax expected more meteors would fall. He'd set up camp -based on the path of the moon- so that the satellite wouldn't bother him as he slept.

The wolf saw white vapor and fur on his jowls and calculated its height and weight. The wolf had heard him say magic and foreign words, from a time before the wolves had run to this land high up, higher to the moon than where their ancestors were born. They had heard tales of the land to the south.

*Maybe this was man-wolf's land first, the alpha-wolf thought, and maybe we ought learn from his ways . He has been stalking elk here for four seasons, he thought, he's taken more of the bounty than we. His black face is long, his breath builds things, his arm reaches moon-travel in times*

*in between my thought; he throws lightning, like summer; he places thunder in the hearts of the bulls and the cows of the elk.*

*Other men come only in one season, this hybrid stays for all 44 moons, like us. He is not of them, maybe he came first, maybe he will be here last,* the wolf thought as the female grumbled from her repose. The alpha wolf chattered to them as they dipped heads and licked their own faces and looked at the ground the man-wolf walked between their own line.

They were at his flank now and had rose as he passed. They looked at one another and began trailing him, five meters behind the alpha wolf, the alpha wolf five meters from the man-wolf sent by the gods.

They all reach the tree line as more clouds covered the moon light from the north, and the snow held the light like a battery. The trees laid blue shadows and stood tall and black at angles that made him feel dizzy. He set up his hammock and top-sail and turned to count the pack. *There were five, and the female* , he thought. The large wolf had begun to jog the perimeter of the camp, as the other pack-mates stood at the 6, 9, and 3 position, bedding under trees with pine needles ringed like a crown at the base.

The female came closer and sat two trees away and again lay down on all fours in the snow. Her coat was thick, and white, and her mask was open-faced and grey. He looked at her paws and then rose his gaze to her snout and as their eyes locked she growled. He looked up from her face, not away, as if the gods were commanding his attention, and she knew that this god was sent from the sky.

Blax remembered the dream, the one with the man with his own face. The inmate had said:

*If everyone was smart, we'd have no villains nor heroes*

The man had said this until Blax had agreed.

The alpha-wolf howled again from the darkness, Blax could not find him with no moonlight. The other wolves chattered but did not rise, and the female stared at him rudely. She was too fascinated to care about wolf-code, the rules were broken first in her heart, her head followed as did the eyes.

## **II. 2038 e.v.**

*This body was the wolf trap.*

*He was born into wolf clan before he was Vikingar and Scoti; sold into slavery outside of Lacedaemon, brought up in the agoge by a father who was made mute in the Peloponnesian wars.*

*Before this he had first been eaten by Óð inn, and trapped in his sons for 1,000 generations, as they invaded and were banished and scattered like Ragnervolt, the bent horn; each son breaking apart into pieces eaten by sea-osprey and ghost-women and worms inside worms inside worms. Each piece a seed, the curse of the god of wolf-way, each seed growing in soil and water farther, and further from home.*

*This last body was marked with the wolfsangel to show the gods it was time to release him back to the first peoples. His prison sentence was up, the debt was almost paid. This he now knew was put upon him, stamped and embossed and branded with a black scar, with keloid and ache, as reminder and sanction. This was his last life of 1,000.*

*The lessons had finally been learned.*

*He had disobeyed wolf-way and had lost not just his life 20,000 years ago but lost his right to be wolf until he could return to the island of his people; the great return. The black mark with the man-machine, had been message to the moon and its eyes that it was time to let*

*this wolf return to the pack. But questions would be asked, and answers would be spoken in wolf, or he'd be rejected by both earth and the moon. He'd be forced into corvid, never landing, as he would forever pass between the earth and her elliptical moon.*

*His final wolf-trap had been split first into 21 pieces; 144 moons ago; scattered about the great forest; close to where water begins. His final task was to pull each piece back together and make the wolf whole once more. He had seen as he came closer to accomplishing this, his methods were unsound, for more and more lapidary, reflective, recursive, pieces had broken off.*

*He counted 1 million now in the wilderness of man's camps; they all bowed and lunged and ignored all-at-once. And they came closer like collapsing lungs of the crow. They retreated like the elk heart blowing apart.*

The wolf way is lost, *he thought*. We don't have strength of limb or jaw to make it adhere to our tongues. We lick blood and it drips back into the bull, we speak and the world fall to earth as rebuke to the moon. We eat but our bellies never fill. We stalk but get lost in the storms. We mate but pups are not born, our females have redrocks and blackstones issue forth, our noses smell no blood anymore.

*He knew enough to think in code, to scramble his thoughts now.* Maybe these gods will show us our error, *he thought* , and for this maybe we can finally - mercifully- offer our lives.

He awoke in quiet.

He knew it was early still, and kept his eyes shut so he could pretend to be at elevation and not here in his bunk.

The tier was quiet in addition to his cell, the guards were between rounds. He had no desire for coffee or cornbread;

he didn't even seek narcotic or the release of his seed.

"The seed," he said low. And he repeated it to himself three times. He felt a knowledge unutterable, before or beyond the *logos*, from the void, the *ein sof*, the place and time before God came into being, and 10 to the 14<sup>th</sup> before God rose to His full height. He had broken the way, the *tao* of ancient man, and for this crime he had been punished backward and forward in time.

The dream melted as he touched it; its details blurred as he gazed. His hands shook, in a way they never had when he labored, murdered, or held a man in his grip. Now they shook and his chest did too, and the eyes grew hot about the edges. He kept staring at the dream behind his lids, wishing to tear out his eyes. He had no desire to live as a man, in prison: *the first prison the body of mommy, the final prison the body of man*. He merely wanted the dream; the dream was all he wanted now, he wanted to know what it means.

"*Ich Weiss jefzs was kein eugel weis,*" he said without ever opening his eyes.

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

"Half the men here could kill me one-on-one. The other half could join forces with one other and kill me. Out of a thousand men, I could be killed seven-hundred-fifty times. I walk with these threats about me, each step, and I speak it now to remind you of your power over me.

"But, I know that as weak and vulnerable as I am, with my neck exposed to your jaws, that I am in no danger. I know this for I know what you know, that the strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf.

*"I know that as I bend at the knee," he said as he dropped to his right kneepan and bent left leg at ninety-degrees , "and as I hold this karuitu, built by my father, and your father, that all will speak for me against, between, the blade and my heart. I submit -still wet with the blood of the battle that fused us- I submit to the will of the Wolves."*

*The men surrounded him in crescent only his back unguarded by the tribe. There were nine-hundred and ninety-nine.*

*He held the eighteen-inch blade at his heart, his war-vest had been removed and set to one side. His chest was bare save the coyote gut threaded by his mother Starrataf as bunge-string and holder of the copper mjölnir. The cord threaded twenty-one bear claws knotted from clavicle to breast bone; the black bear unguis numbering twenty, from five black bear he had killed and taken four claws from each. The single brown bear nail, four-inches in length, was given to him by his wet-mother through his blood-grandfather -Blax- and it hung at the six o'clock of his chest.*

*As brother to that longclaw was the old brass shell gone black and burnt bronze from sun and its cold and heat of the Selene; dark from each lupine female who had drew it into her mouth as they made love under the gibbous moon. He thought of how they gave birth in winter regardless of when he seeded them. He thought of the way each babe looked as the eyes lightened and the hair darkened in time.*

*The threshing sun was tattooed on the pectoral over the heart and the blade had already drawn one line of blood as the call went up from the man's rival to the clan. The ragged rays of the black sonne tattoo were like lightning that struck at the tip of the blade.*

*His rival spoke:*

*"Ljotefugl, twice bent, sonne of Lyngvi of Vinland, brother to Remsivarth of the sea between these two lands, has failed to bow to the gods, failed to walk the way, failed to articulate his error and failed to make offering to the pack," Ljotefugl's rival said as the assemblage shut out all other noises of the forest and let the man speak his grief as was the law.*

*"I challenged him and he scorned me," the man further said as Ljotefugl remained bent and with short-sword at his breast moving slowly -as the speech went on- and into the deep flesh of the heavy chest. He breathed long and slow and the muscle and skin heaved into the point. A small rivulet of blood drained from surface capillaries and ran crooked to the nipple and hung there like a vernal icicle wet and hard and clear as the forest let light pierce him.*

*The wind blew boughs from the way of the sun.*

*"I submit his fate to the pack, I submit -still wet from the ocean of our trip- I submit our fate to the Wolves," he said as he too took a knee and drew his sword made by Lyngvi in the forge shaped like bronze armguard, like rock cave dug out by machine, like the bore of iron cannon atop the towers of castles and walls between regions and along each fold in the brain of mankind. The edge was curved like the golden curve, to the tang the metal was burnished in Damascus greys as all swords but Lyngvi's -who was still west of the Atlantic from here- and Ljotefugl's -who both had tanto blades made of pure black- were.*

*The rival too had already drawn blood by breaking the skin over his chest, tattooed with the ravens made so each reach was at each tail, and caw at each beak, and claw at each talon was fixed in ink on the skin. One eye*

*was black in grey raven ink, one aged eye -sang-mele-  
tattooed in the dark raven at bottom now circled the tip  
of the mottled and whetstoned sword.*

*The blade had found the claws where they grasped, and  
the blood seemed to run from their clutch as the  
WolfKult had heard each man out and now bowed and  
prayed and begun to harmonize in a roar between and  
just under bough of the trees of this, the Isle of Skye.*

*There was no precedent for such a challenge, and no  
reason would be offered nor allowed. English common  
law and Scottish dialectic were both banished from all  
challenges of this type. This was honor, moral judgment,  
this was what eyes saw when opened, what dreams said  
when man was least deceptive, what the pack knew in  
letters of just four.*

*It was the gods who would decide, and speak; and thus,  
none, one, or both men would die by the sound of the  
howl of the newly merged clan of the Wolves.*

He awoke from the dream and the wind was above them.

400-feet , he guessed, as his PGC told him it was 368.3 feet  
where the first layer of winds over 7-knots blew. He  
squeezed the lids tight, pulled the black bear fur over his  
legs, and let his torso stay chilled.

He then opened his eyes and saw Starr's back like  
patchwork quilt of colors, eggshell, Amur tiger, and the ice  
about the loch of *Kaffenklubben Sør* . She had about her  
cresting shoulders a *chamois* -made of tanned hides from  
the elk hunt three seasons ago- but her ass and legs were  
uncovered and the skin pimples in the cool room like a  
thousand kurgan mounds along the Siberian plain.

He grabbed the bearskin in his hand and stared at the walls  
and the glow of the altar that ran up ten-meters high. He let  
his eyes return to her. He saw that her lithe arms were



above her head as if falling in her dream of the woods; he stared at her lids as they fluttered and bulged over the REMs. He wanted to dream with her, to join her in that world many moons and brilliant stars apart. He placed the dark cover over her and took his hand as he now missed the sight of her skin.

As the desire came upon him he stopped his mind with a terse word; internally issued and heard.

He admitted that he'd just dreamed of his child, and the hour and place of that boy's death. He then acknowledged that he -his son- would be born of Starr in 240 days as his coder confirmed the denuded egg had been fertilized and that all 46 of his chromosomes had been transferred, unfragmented and unalloyed by the division of hell and heaven, land and sea, the invisible and the seen.

A cicada sat -early, vertically- in the corner of the room.

## 41: Daniel 13

Our intellect has achieved the most tremendous things, but in the meantime our spiritual dwelling has fallen into disrepair. We are absolutely convinced that even with the aid of the latest and largest telescope, now being built in America, men will discover behind the farthest nebulae no fiery empyrean; and we know that our eyes will wander despairingly through the dead emptiness of interstellar space. Nor is it any better when mathematical physics reveals to us the world of the infinitely small. In the end we dig up the wisdom of all ages and people, only to find that everything most dear and precious to us has already been said in the most superb language

Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious [Jung, Carl]

This centrality is appropriate not only because they are occupying a central role in time and space but in nearly every other respect as well. Which is why it always seem strange how little attention conventional historians pay to the *Scythians* . You'll find this to be a central theme as this series continues. The steppe people known as the *Scythians* and their kindred can be best thought of as the largest and most centrally placed. Genetically, culturally and linguistically it's difficult to think of any nation or empire across the middle east, Europe or Asia that wasn't either founded or deeply shaped by this large family within which this *Scythian* element is centrally placed. Instead of speaking of them as one people spreading out from the Caucasus's across most of the known world, conventional theory has instead treated each subgroup as if they were a distinct people with a different culture and way of life, emerging independently from one another. And we give the different groups a separate name causing them to appear even more distinct. One group moves into India and become Indian, another into Persia and become Persians... and this was bound to cause great confusion.

The historian Marcus Justinus states *that The Scythian was always regarded as very ancient, though there was a long dispute between them and the Egyptians concerning the antiquity of their respective races. The Egyptians being confounded by these arguments the Scythians were always considered the more ancient* .

But it gets even more intriguing, the 17<sup>th</sup> century historian Geoffrey Keating claims that the *Scythians* were of Noah and his progeny and that the Sumerians were descended from them. *Epiphanius of Salamis* writes that the *Scythians* were the ones who built the tower of Babel and that the ancient Sumerians themselves were their decedents and he goes on to state the *Scythian* monarchy began soon after the flood...and that they were the first after the flood to try and reform mankind.

And herein lies one of the most intriguing mysteries of these peoples, not only were they extremely capable warriors on the battlefield credited with the invention of metallurgy and bronze and longboats and even silk, and responsible for some of the greatest thinkers of the age including *Anacharsis* -one of the seven sages of Greece- as well being brilliant artists and craftsmen, but they

also seemed to be universally respected. The Greeks considered them their more wild and less domesticated cousins. Homer called them the most just of all peoples and the most proud. And According to *Stapho* they were men who quote, *will by no means spend their lives on contracts and money acquisition... and they actually possesses all things in common except sword and drinking cup*

Historical Research Collaboration Project [Asha Logos]

Choosing the limits might be the most political decision you'll have to make as a host. Set the stakes too high and you'll gradually starve players out of the game. Set them too low and you'll have a frenzy of raising and re-raising with all kinds of junk hands, turning your purported game of skill into bingo night on steroids

Poker: The Real Deal [Gordon, Phil]

## **I. 2029 e.v.**

"Isaiah, that's all very cute, but it doesn't answer my question," MO said with a slight sign of pique.

"I'm not sure I've ever been spoken to in that tone of voice," Isaiah said with a tilt of the head to larboard. He grinned to remove the sting; he grinned larger then to reinsert the barb.

The new maps from Baltimore, New Orleans and Colorado Springs updated on the PraXis cloud; the data MO needed populated first in columns then they helixed and combined. A report had been produced from gathered intelligence from the on-scene *bots* that recorded each word -and now each thought- of the people in the area. The *bots* could build a narrative from external and internal language of each person and the conditions of the place.

This data was read out parallel to the maps:

### **I. 0440MST**

"Three maybe. A season," *Nephus* said.

"Check that window for rollers," Darnel waved his hand at the window; he hated the way the blinds never fully closed.

“He ain’t coming back, *B* put the boys on it, they’ll make or find,” *Nephus* said and checked the window anyway.

The brothers had been speaking all night and into the dawn now. The house had been rented last week by the gang and no women or children were there; nor would they be. The weapons were laid out on the wooden crates that had come in by straight-truck with a lift-gate two days ago.

*Nephus* looked at his brother and could see something new there, a kind of stoicism, a lack of the wet eyes from before. He didn’t know if it was prison or the medicine - the gene-editing shit- the white folks did. Darnel used to get hurt so easily, he remembered from when they worked at Owen Corning. As he stared back out of the window looking at nothing, he recalled when Darnel was fired; he had white lines from the salt on his ashy face, and the eyes themselves had been yellow and red.

He loved his brother and he was nervous that this was the kind of thing -this job- that a conversation could ruin.

*It had been that Italian guy -Joshua or Jake or someshit- and their front-end lead, Lyndon, Nephus thought, who took the white boy’s side.* Lyndon had been kind to Darnel at first, him being brothers with Nephus and all. And Darnel was a good worker, but when the Italian - *which was really just another kind of white boy* , Nephus thought, ragged on Darnel, Lyndon refused to stick up for his little brother. Nephus never forgot that, he wanted to, he didn’t like holding grudges, but he remembered the way Oklahoma was, and the way their dad behaved. Loyalty was just the only way for his people to survive and even after you’re *ok* , you still do the things that got you *ok* .

*It’s hard for people to change strategies midgame* , he thought, as he pulled his hands from the blinds. Nephus

was half Cherokee on his mother's side and part African - from Kenya- and his father had told him stories of Nephus' uncles and the ways of the *Kalenjins* recruited by the Axis powers in north Africa and the Indians back before the first World War which took his great grandfather to France and left him there. His maternal uncles had been kind to his father, he was told. And they had known of the old ways well enough to teach Nephus' father how to hunt and skin game.

"Check them blinds again," Darnel said and *Nephus* did. There was nothing outside but parked cars, and mailboxes and one feral cat whose eyes he could see - green and glowing- under a Buick parked the wrong way on the street.

"Anyway, that was summer and this is fall, and winter is coming quick this year man," Nephus said with a small grin that hid his large white teeth. He had skin the color of a man mixed in the Caribbean or New Orleans, and he had eyes that were shaped like from the *steppe* . His head was shaped perfectly to be shaved and his neck was thick and strong like it held up an intelligence two above the mean.

In fact, he had an intelligence and an aesthetic and generosity of spirit as if from five continents and six of seven seas. He said this to get his brother to re-focus on their decision and away from the window.

"*Nigga* , I know," Darnel said with an attitude and drank from the coffee mug of the Blitz. Darnel had no idea what the east coast was like. *What did he know of Baltimore and their ways ?* he wondered. Denver was foreign enough now that he was out and he didn't feel like *bangin'* anymore here, let alone all the way to whichever waters were out there. He imagined it was beach at the edge like Miami, then he thought maybe -

since it was black folk's land- the bay was like the Platte River, all garbage and no bottom and no blue in the water at all.

"How many in they crew?" Darnel asked again and *Nephus* told him it was over a hundred and that they'd keep the whip they'd get from this job and drive it straight there. Darnel's face -which had always been darker than his own- was not darker now, but instead had more angles in it *Nephus* thought. He checked the window again and Darnel said that sure, he'd go to Baltimore after this job. He looked at the pistols and wondered how the long guns even worked.

## **II. 0913EST**

From Pigtown to Patterson Park the land will flood first with a rise associated with a mere two feet of surge.

Property being exchanged since 2021 [*via Panzroh LLC*] has made three level steps to purchase the four blocks beginning at Johns Hopkins and Pimlico and out to Lake Roland. New plumbing connected to freshwater wells we have drilled is tapped; and the service rooms are double walled [see addendum 4a]

New construction in all three areas is over thirty meters high, with generators and desalination works on the fifth floor.

Genetic samples from West Baltimore projects -and city jails- are in and logged. High testosterone males and females [study: >98.1% African American population] are at 61% compared to the mean, and among that chort, 88% of the top 10% is a) currently incarcerated, b) released within 18 months, or c) has a BOLO or Warrant out for their apprehension. *Bots* have been affixed to all but the 312 we have no (sic) located yet. Up to twenty-one are considered likely to be deceased.

High ground is secured, water and fuel production and distribution are secured, and target population is located and endogenous to the area.

Natural bonds are present and operational. Human social dynamics are present and unlikely to need adjusting; however, *bots* are placed subcutaneously and can adjust the target's allostatic system with initiation of protocol X-Z. That is under the aegis of Isaiah.

*Patapsco* has each ship and container under surveillance as the *bots* recorded 3.2% of the cargo is illicit fentanyl from China, and 1.1% is miscellaneous human traffic, bootlegged items and weapons from the Ukraine. The other places of origin were detuned from the list. <end>

### **III. 0909EST**

New Orleans was still hot, and the last flood from two summer's ago -Hurricane Carolyn- had forced the city into federal emergency management. The Governor of the State, Graflin Anamander, had allowed it and told the mayor to step aside or go to jail. Three meetings had been had in as many days before the mayor finally stepped aside and let the LNG take administrative control.

The *Landsat9* showed the bend at *Buras-Triumph* and the wetlands spider like broken glass. MO saw fractals of coast and out to sea, he saw it move in reeds, settle in rocks with shells embedded like knuckles, he saw it blue and green and brown and white, he saw it over time-lapse of three days and two nights.

He stared at Black Bay and up to *Delacroix* , then *Belle Chasse* and the back to *Lafitte* and Little Lake and *Lafourche* .

He weighed the water, measured the land, he did both to the swamp and the sand. He breathed in once and

held it for 66 minutes; he blinked one time, then twice in two hours and one half. He already knew the *pH* , and the brackish freeze point; he had ascertained the O<sup>2</sup> levels at 6,289 points in the bay. Louisiana had 45.1% of the wetlands of the entire USA. He watched as it eroded over time; and saw it was still being reduced by 1.9 square-miles a year.

He saw mankind go about his business like ants in the grass. He remembered the inmate had asked -last Wednesday- for lamb and at wine from Arizona.

He watched 401 models of how wetlands absorbed storm surge. He noted its effects and compared it to more naked -vulnerable- coasts.

He traveled -in his mind's eye- the Lake *Pontchartrain* Causeway to Mandeville and back. He stopped in at *Tremé* and rested the eyes, he saw four kinds of smoke from cigars and catfish and diesel *genies* at the edge of the quarter; and one kind of blue smoke from an old '55 Chevy with two busted oil-rings idling on *Decatur* . He listened to the audio recording and heard the Jacks speak now at nine years of age and he slotted them -burning cards every other time- on the felt of his game. *Canal at Bourbon, then left at Canal at Dauphine* -he thought in sparks at .0001 of a second- as he made a square loop and deburred the corners of each card. The ears picked up from Burgundy, and the *Museum de Mort* , the Black Penny on Rampart and St Peter.

He ran the *ppms* of the fluids in the copper pipes behind water-walls two stories high.

He had eyes everywhere.

The cobwebs -in the corners of the bar- of the white spiders were catching the fog rolling in a few hours before the big storm. The cigar smoke pressed down into



the webbing from the humidity, the black flies caught were rolled over by the plumes from the *Montecristos* and *Tabernacle Havana Seed 142* . They looked charred black and tumbled in smoke. The networks looked silvery and dew drops looked like pearls of glass around a necklace abandoned by a *Helen of Troy* once a *Helen of Sparta* .

The mint in the *Mojitos* was three-fold and speared and so humid it ridged; the lime was dark and light; the rum was white and clearly half gone. The muddler was wooden and beveled at each end.

He could see them, place them, move them -his Jacks- and with the checkered flooring at Cuban Creations at 533 *Toulouse* ; he dialed the number and let it ring. He saw the chess *terrazzo* , the Caribbean blue barback, the handrolls, the humans like gumbo, the high ceilings & the flag kids outside of the second line. He saw two Cuban men playing chess, and the board showed an -a4-Tate Variation of the Alekhine Defense by white as black moved his pawn to d6. Ice rattled in the drinks; the rings on the older man's hands made his high-ball glass chink when he picked it up.

The five-bladed fans turned languidly above the smoke and the men and the floor.

He felt the *bones* to a baker's dozen, felt the sweaty drinks in Collins glasses gripped by *creole* and Argentine and tanned and piratical -and just from the sea- hands. MO made fists in the lab as he took in real time data, old info and future avatars. He saw the Jacks in time -in links like chains, like peptides, like solar flares and red and black bursts- and he knew in New Orleans the Jacks would be seen as merely triplets in a town of no second looks, no double takes, no *redux* not re-do's.

He saw a copy of *Invisible Man* turned over under a bottle of *Macallan* disgorged the year the Jacks were born.

*"Ah, here we are," Brother Jack said.*

He circled above insouciantly and waited for *Vlatko* to show up at the bar miles away in uptown. MO waited a mere 99 seconds and the man entered *the Roule* .

*Vlatko Babic* hated the N.O.; he wanted back in his *Mississippi* . But his money had come in and come to the *Bon Temps* on Magazine. And MO's man had arrived and paid the expat in gold bullion, American Eagles -at \$2800 an ounce these days- enough to weight him down two -Troy ounce- pounds. It was in a Pelican case eighteen inches long and six wide, like an artist might carry for brushes or a dealer for a sample kilo of narcotic or a *sommelier* for one 750ml fat bottomed *bourgogne* or *Champagne* he'd open tonight.

As *Vlatko* sat in the bar and planned to imbibe his soda water -to leave one third or one forth unfinished- the men walked toward the red door and black sandwich board -the tables of midday drunks- and tried to stay out of the street. The pavement leaned one way, they leaned the other. Uptown was stocked with delivery drivers and straight trucks and these black men seemed eager to reach the bar.

*And there they were* , MO thought, as the group of five men moved up the *boulevard* , in single file, stepping off the sidewalk when one would threaten to overtake the lead man. It had rained all day and the heat misted up the second story floors as the lime green ferns hung out in each cutout of the buildings from which -in 1862- General Order 28 had been proclaimed.

Back then four southern -confederate- men had hanged within a day, and the ladies of the night had complained but now in hushed tones. And now these *belle* whispers included calling any many without a rope around their neck a coward or at the very least a traitor of some kind.

A law designed to manacle women -The Union General had in fact called them, *devils* - had only -merely- lowered their voices, but it had raised men up on lamp posts and from princess balconies along St. Ann.

MO watched the video as the report fizzled and faded and returned like bees to a comb; he watched -absently- to see just what *Vlatko* would do one on five. Play is older than culture... animals have not waited for man to teach them their playing.

*Homo Ludens* , by Huzinga, Johan , he thought and added to the report.

MO then moved and stood at the location of the *ojo* of a one-eyed jack had it been printed to take up the entirety of the floor of the rectangle of the lab. He held his hands out - palms at a cant- and did not blink. He and Isaiah did not speak, and MO thought he caught a little wink from the one eye of his son. Isaiah loaded up the data from Egypt as MO watched from his interface, the cloud and his two eyes:

*Certain DNA 'stutters' (repetitive stretches of bases) get passed intact from parent to child, so they offer a way to trace lineages. Unfortunately for [King] Tut, both his parents had the same stutters because his mom and dad had the same parents. Nefertiti may have been Akhenaten's most celebrated wife, but for the crucial business of producing an heir, Akhenaten turned to his sister.*

*Powerful forces within Egypt never forgave the family's sins and when Tut died heirless, an army general seized*

*the throne. Ramses and his successors expunged most traces of the pharaohs, erasing them with the same determination Akhenaten had shown in erasing other gods. As a final insult, Ramesses and his heirs erected buildings over Tut's tomb (sic) to conceal it. As a result, Tut's treasures survived mostly intact over the centuries, treasures that in time, would grant him and his heretical -incestuous- family something like immortality again .*  
[Kean, Sam]

## **II. 2036 e.v.**

"From *virtus* , meaning *manliness* , comes virtue," Blax said. He felt he'd said it likely for the hundredth time. But as he watched their faces the Jacks showed no grin nor grimace. They lay on their beds. The even Jacks reclined. The odd two were seated with books in hand and lap. Jack Four had been reading aloud from his notebook and only stopped to let Blax speak.

However, now in the quiet Jack resumed.

*"...it is necessary that republics have laws that enable the mass of the population to give vent to the hostility it feels ,"* Jack Four quoted from Niccoló , *"for if no mechanism exists extra-legal methods will be employed and without doubt these will have much worse consequences than legal ones ."*

"Discourses, 1531 CE. Page 105," Jack One said with a kind of dismissive vex, a sharp tone that trailed off at the sentence came to an end. His eyes and arms seemed to swell in his berth as the mouth shut down tight. He glared across the container to Jack Three as if he was Four but by a proxy; and Blax watched this as his own arm hairs stood up.

Blax saw -maybe first, maybe at last, he couldn't say- that the books that lined the Jacks' container had multiplied and

grown olive green at spine, bare and straw along the edge, gilt and craquelured in authorial and imprint stampings, and one by one he could see they all had been read by each Jack in mere summer months and then recalled -at will- in winter daylight seconds. *A will, he thought, a will suffering from this lack of hardship in acquiring knowledge; erudition it took civilization millennia to work out and write down and preserve against fires at Alexandria and sinking ship in Crete. These boys just gobbled it all down between the buds of spring and the raking of leaves of the fall.*

"Behind the flanks of bulls of the sea," he said quietly.

"*Men attack out of revenge not ambition*," Jack Two said as he lay coffin-like -the pillow removed- and his head in line with his prone body. He stared up at the top bunk of Jack.

"Aristotle, 1311a, *Politika*," Jack Three said and looked at Jack Two across the still harsh gaze of Jack One like swords akimbo at 45-degrees.

"For what is revenge if not ambition?" Jack Four asked as he lay his own notebook down and the other Jacks scanned their PGCs for attribution to a quote that they'd soon realize Jack had not taken from history but given to the room from his own mind.

Jack ignored Blax, taking only this etymology of *virtue* in his mind; banishing the man from his thoughts. All four Jacks had wanted him to leave them be. He came around sometimes at night like this to tend, to lay hands upon, to read temperatures, to see if sabotage and plots were in the air. And this offended them for four idiosyncratic reasons, and for one reason common to all. They each thought -at once, then together- of the *Medea* gene and saw Blax's tending to their vines as superfluous and thus a luxury and thus an offense to -the loci of- where they were impoverished: liberty and independence.

But Jack thought now of Aristotle and the words lay on a parchment in his mind; a scroll, an *umbilicus* , that rolled down and up as each line was revealed and put away:

*For if there is a person so outstanding by his excess of virtue, such persons can no longer be regarded as part of the city. For they will be done an injustice if it is claimed they merit equal things despite being so unequal in virtue... for such a man would likely be a god among mere human beings.*

### **III. 2029 e.v.**

He stood again in the hallway and let the sounds of the auditorium be muted and funneled like from a bell through a tunnel to his ear. The hallways of the building were sparsely populated and Nathan hung back; by the double doors. His security detail stood at both ends of the hall.

The auditorium was again mostly women, and their children were combed and pressed and fine in dress. But -unlike before- now some of the ex-cons were in the rooms too, and they stood out as their heads looked about instead of straight ahead like the women, or face-to-face like the kids.

They smiled more but they also guarded the doors; if only in their mind. The CRISPR allele fixes -along with the training while incarcerated- had indeed given them functioning *limbic* systems and a strange amalgam of empathy and what one of them called a *bird's eye view* . What he meant when he said that to Jason DeShazo -his PO- was that he could not only feel things, but he could sense what others felt too.

Like blind men taught to see, given eyes, but no lids; they were given a world upon which to gaze but no way to shut it out. These men now how feelings inside and outside too.

The men -sociopaths for 99% of their lives- were now among the feeling class of their species. And they felt naked where others might only feel the sun upon the skin, the warm water on the flesh. These ex-inmates felt vulnerable and yet could not help but be warmed by the love from their kin as each applause, each backslap, each award was given out by the PraXis corporation tonight.

Feelings earnest and in congress with their fellow man had the shadow of what they felt next: pain. They now knew a pain of the feelings that had once only been of the outer body, of the cut or bruise, the smack or bullet wound. Now they knew what it was to feel a broken heart.

And they saw more and more what each tic of the face, each syllable of a word, each hitch in a step now meant in their people; their women; their kids. They saw in contrast a way to get a drop on their enemies too.

“This *fuckin’* chuck what?” the dark man said as he passed by. The lockers were blue and his white pants and shirt - embossed with burnt orange Texas Longhorn T’s- seemed strange against his flawless dark skin; even the eyes had no deviation, the cheeks and neck all one tone. It seemed so stark a relief as to vivisect the man into head and hands only. His clothes were like a curtain between him and the world.

“*Naw* man, ain’t a *rouser* ,” *Nephus* said as they smoked cloves & amber-dab cigarettes inside the hall and walked languidly toward the northern doors that led into the bell-shaped room. Darnel was inside with his girls -his daughters- and had been presented with an award for entrepreneurial excellence earlier that evening. His brother - *Nephus* - and Darnel’s former boss had left and come back now at 19:17hrs.

*Nephus* Cobbs calmed his boss, *Raffi* , with such words; and yet kept his dignity in tone and gait and mien. The black

men oscillated between such states as they orbited the pomp and circumstance of the graduating class of 2029 inside the auditorium and the larger phenomenon of what was being done to the black community. *Nephus* was proud of his brother, but he had a job to do; as the number one to *Raffi* Jones -the KP to Denver's Rollin' 303 gang- he provided a buffer between him and the larger white world.

And Darnel was a bit of ghost now, an apparition like all the men released early from Colorado's lock ups since 2021; the year the first of them came home.

*Raffi* had made lieutenant to *Brainchild* before *Rahmalla* 'Brainchild' Jones had been locked up on a double homicide; and now *Raffi* was kingpin to over 1,771 men and women of the gang. The whole gang had been formed by *Rollin' 30* LA ex-pats escaping the harsh probation of California. But by now they were almost exclusively Denver and Aurora born.

*Nephus* had an IQ of 131.

But, unlike most smart guys, he actually knew not to show that shit off. But he thought in music often to hide thoughts that seemed too sophisticated for his crew. *Nephus* saw that the *golden section* was used in *Dufay* , *Bach* , *Bartok* , and *Sibelius* as scaffold; he saw -and here agreeing with *Sabaneev* - that *Chopin* and *Beethoven* and *Schubert* and Mozart -at 92%, 97%, 91%, and 91%- all used it in compositions that he heard play -obtrusively- in his head.

Ratios of 13:8 appeared like faces in clouds; and yet he didn't know what was there and what would disappear when he blinked.

The *Rollin's* ran drug from *Belize* and laundered cash with the catcher down there; and they still paid tribute to the LA unit every 30 days. *Keke Loco* was locked up at ADX and so his NYC crew came once a month to gain entry to Colorado and to courier for him. The initial parties had turned into



mere meetings and downtempo meetings were now just perfunctory handshakes from a car. The gang had run girls for awhile but the whole thing collapsed when the *Bolivars* took over all human smuggling and the 303's had been told they didn't have the muscle or the inclination to do anything but run drugs and cash between Denver and LA anymore.

*Raffi* walked like he was in charge still, but he knew things were bad.

And that meant that he knew that meant he either was *gonna* get tough or die. And he had no intention of dying. He was 24-years old and had been in the gang since he was eight and had moved with his mom, four brothers and one sister to the HUD bricks off Federal boulevard. *He didn't know it but that meant 16 to 8 was his ratio inside the R303*, *Nephus* thought.

He walked and talked in the empty hall. The genetic testing of each inmate had given the gang data on each member and each child of the clan. And *Raffi* was more and more interested in ferreting out any annealing or what he called: 'white blood.' He had even gone so far as to see genetic material from the Spanish line of Mexico and South America as tainted in some way. He didn't trust the white man's science but he didn't like seeing the babies born with light skin or wavy hair; he didn't like the Spanish baby-momma's nor the white girls who kinked their hair.

*Raffi* thought of this more and more as he thought of why Darnel betrayed them. And it made him not want to look *Nephus'* way.

*Nephus* thought of the systole and diastole of his mama, she was sick and he had watched the nurse and the numbers both. He thought of expansion and contraction of the lungs; he thought of when they went to the sea in Galveston and the tides had a rhythm like music too, he saw the wax and wane of moon -for he was up late each night now that he

ran the overnight H-crew- and he thought of the day and night, the rush of tides, the way the sand seemed to hold numbers of grains like coins of gold.

"The way up and the way down are the same," *Nephus* said quoting *Heraclitus* ; but not garishly, not with attribution. Things just came to him like lyrics or beats.

"And these find-Jesus *niggas* are gonna find him on the other side, *nigga* ," *Raffi* said and *Nephus* looked around as if checking for threats but really he was avoiding having to agree or disagree with the threat of killing of his brother. He thought -in some part of his mind like an island, some Tahiti of the soul- that maybe Darnel would be *ok* .

They passed the former Governor and didn't recognize him at all. They walked with affected limps, and held their hands around their smokes, and talked about the white man as if he was both there and of no consequence, like the moon.

"Tomorrow," Sou said to himself -lost in reverie- just as the black men ambled by. He had looked down at his feet but saw his own shirt and tie. He -in a slim tablet- held the data on each life since release; each prisoner, each family. He held the metrics that showed improvements in all but one category. But he wanted to come here each time and see the men and women and children, he wanted to see what he'd done.

*Nephus* and *Raffi* were there to police the gang's losing of each member as they came back. The gangs had lost over 30% of their soldiers when they came home with the *Krispee* -as they called it- and *Nephus'* boss was here tonight to see them, to see the defectors, the men who went into prison as men and came out as mice.

"I *wanna* lay my eyes on 'em ," he had said.

*Raffi* had spent almost two hours in the Escalade parked outside stewing and then two minutes complaining that the

cops were ruining the black man with Tuskegee experiments that he insisted were going on inside the jails. *Nephus* had not heard of the exact experiments, but he nodded and said he thought the same thing.

Nephus held a book with his finger between pages 110 and 111 of, *The Trouble with Testosterone* by Sapolsky. He recalled reading the last few paragraphs of that chapter. He looked toward the building as the way he both agreed and objected to the book's idea circled his brain like a drain:

*There is a Russian story that takes place at the gates of Heaven where the newly arrived are judged. A dead murder is on trial, fresh from earth where he was shot by the police after his umpteenth murder, the strangling of an elderly woman for her money. A panel of deceased judges sits in session. And where does God fit on the scene?*

*Not as a judge, but as required character witness. At some point in the proceedings, he shambles in, sits in a magisterial decrepitude born of the weight of infinite knowledge, and in a meandering, avuncular way, does his best to defend and explain the man—"He was always kind to animals. He was very upset when he lost his favorite top when he was a small boy" (My red top, you know about my red top?!?!)" The murderer leaps up, suddenly awash in a torrent of memory. "Of course I do. It rolled down the storm drain on Zlotny Street. It's still down there," God answers with complete, affectless knowing.)*

*Finally, the judges tire of God, who is in fact tiresome in his knowledge and forgiveness, and they coax him off the stand.*

*When science brings us something new and startling, when there is a breakthrough that opens new vistas, there is often talk about us acquiring godlike knowledge,*

*and the tacit assumption is that this is a good thing. But the God of this parable is useless, has been shunted aside by the indiscriminateness of his knowledge. Knowledge, familiarity, understanding, must not ever lead us to a detached indiscriminateness. The danger in Olympian knowledge is that you then look down upon things from an Olympian height, and from that telescoped distance, things seem equivalent—like a lost red top and a strangled woman, or perhaps an awkward adolescent that produces an awkward adult and an awkward adolescent that produces a murderous one.*

*But there is a difference*

And after all that waiting and the bitching and moaning -and with the book held until Nephus finally laid it down- they'd exited the truck and walked inside. That was 6,100 seconds ago.

The white man in the hall made a few noises -some groans as consequences of his gears turning- and the black men pulled their long jerseys up over their pistols in a sign that they didn't like that the white man in the tight suit was talking as they passed. The black handles of the frames stood out against the white ribbed a-shirt and their black hands looked lithe and bony holding up the folds of the large outer garments.

"Tomorrow," Sou said again and both white men -ignoring the black men- knew that meant he was to run for Governor again.

## 42. Isaiah's Curse

Since we believe that these 'shades of grey' questions lie at the crux of the modeling of mind, they merit further discussion. A special fluid quality of human cognition is that often, solutions to a problem seem to come from far outside the problem as conceived of originally. This is because problems in the real world do not have sharp definitions; when one is in, or hears about, a complex situation, one typically pays no conscious attention to the question of what counts as 'in' the situation and what counts as 'out' of it

Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies [Hofstadter, Douglas]

When grave persons express their fear that England is relapsing into Paganism, I am tempted to reply, "Would that she were." For I do not think it at all likely that we shall ever see Parliament opened by the slaughtering of a garlanded white bull in the House of Lord or Cabinet Ministers leaving sandwiches in Hyde Park as an offering for the Druids. If such a state of affairs came about, then the Christian apologist would have something to work on.

For a pagan -as history shows- is a man eminently convertible to Christianity. He is essentially the pre-Christian, or sub-Christian, religious man. The post-Christian of our day differs from him as much as a *divorcée* differs from a virgin

God in the Dock [Lewis, CS]

Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing they do not hear. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: *you will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing by never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes*

Matthew 13:13 [King James Bible]

### **I. 2033 e.v.**

The black planet *TrES b2* was 749.9 light years from Isaiah; 15.045 light years from his latest satellite. It reflected <1% of its own star's light. It was a gaseous and super-hot orb coming it at 1100 degrees Celsius. It glowed a dim wine-red in his mind.

Isaiah reserved this for himself. He kept the data close and tried not to crush it as it squirmed inside him.

He combined it with information from the vineyards; he added the dreams of a thirteen-year-old Jack; and the shape-like horologe- of the womb of the girl. And then he let the words from the interview repeat -like grains of sand- one more time:

*Then there are the virgin bees, the princess bees, the females which are selected from the eggs of the Queen when they are hatched and preserved in case an unfruitful Queen should bring disappointment to the hive...*

*When the time is ripe for the Queen to take her nuptial flight the male bees are drilled and regimented. The Queen passes the drones which guard the gate of the hive, and the male bees follow her in rustling array. Strongest of all the inhabitants of the hive, more powerful than any of her subjects, the Queen launches into the air, spiraling upward and upward, the male bees following. Some of the pursuers weaken and fail, drop out of the nuptial chase, but the Queen swings higher and higher until a point is reached in the far ether where but one of the male bees remains.*

*By the inflexible law of natural selection he is the strongest, and he mates with the Queen. At the moment of marriage his body splits asunder and he perishes.*

*The Queen returns to the hive, impregnated, carrying with her tens of thousands of eggs—a future city of bees, and then begins the cycle of reproduction, the concentration of the teeming life of the hive in unceasing work for the birth of a new generation. [Tesla, Nikola]*

He did not yet believe he understood the route he'd take to the stars. *So much space, but still too much clutter* , he thought.

So much was limited by his body; a body he knew he needed, like booster rocket, to get him to this point. But to travel away from the earth required a million million things that had to be worked out and even with using the clones as external-drives, the inmate as addendum to his own *limbic system*, MO as -well, as all the things that MO was- still left him with logistical concerns that he felt he was 1.4 to 8.8 years away from solving.

He built another algorithm; he added new functions to old numbers.

He felt a groping, prostrating, search with the left hand in the darkness of the world. Isaiah was unsure if MO had access to his thinking even when he had blocked the searching eye of the cloud. It made him nervous, cautious, even a bit coy. He thought of other things, other planets, other men, other times, to cover his one true focus.

"That swirling, hurricane cloud," he said aloud as his mind pored over the rushing incoming information and the deep sea of old data too. He laid them on top of one another and picked them up in time as well. He stared into his fecund wall. He let the mud-wasps land on him where he had healing wounds, he allowed the hummingbirds to feed from his veins that he'd opened again. The black ants were given permission to crawl into his ears and nose and mouth.

He counted up what was known compared to his doubts.

He let memories feast upon new narratives his mind created; he allowed stories to borrow liberally from archetypes and lastly he gave permission to his modeling system to build new avatars from comet crystallography and the clone's RNA recapitulation and idiosyncratic gene expression and the construction of several types of hives of bees and ants and termites.



He preferred to sit when thinking on these things, but today he remained upright.

He let the *bots* measure each part of his body, again. They maintained their ratios of crown to navel, from his urethra to each footpad; elbow to wrist, each metatarsal, and then each narrow fovea in the orchard of *Lafite* and the wide apertures of ragged fissures in the Atlantic, he let his mind see.

*55 Cancri-e* was twice the size of earth; and it was one-third solid lapidary gemstone. The high carbon content made a permanent diamond forty light years from earth. He flagged it as one possible waystation for when he traveled.

He ran digital avatars of Blax in the vineyards.

He then watched Laird's large and sinewy body -the hip so damaged he barely could walk on land- locked into the barrel at *Teahupo'o* .

He was uninhibited by gravity and the damage to his reputation by the surfing community who rejected him, his wife that was furious with him, a past that haunted him. The wave was measured by Isaiah again, for the 1.568 billionth time. He took volume and force and velocity and each cubic foot of sea-water, a lattice work of droplets and mathematics and work and cavitation and maelstrom as he ran the man's mindset from that day's drop-in on that one wave. He modeled the emotion at each one one-hundredths of a second through each juxtaposition with the swell's hydraulics, the torque, the malice, the spit.

There are no waves like that on the planet, dependent on a thousand and one factors in space and time. *Storm surge out to sea* , Isaiah thought. *Depth before the reef, and the shallow plateau that broke the back of the writhing tidals that cursed in Tahitian and laid hex on the men who challenged each one as sets came in at 33 feet.*

“The golden face of the wave,” Isaiah said as he watched it again.

Isaiah just made categories of words and in gallons and cubic meters and in temperatures and salinity and conductivity and levels of virus and bacteriophage he tried to bolt down the wave like a drink. The volume of water was a hundred times the norm for a wave that height. Any surge over 15-feet of that type was considered un-rideable. With this storm it was moving so fast, that as it cracked over the reef and Laird had a hard time just stopping himself from being sucked up into the torque of the churn, the great mill. He pressed his 205lbs of muscle and bone and blood down in the *Tangaroa-Oro* vortex of god-math and the liquid fuel of Satan; an amalgam of *Tawhiri* making a virgin birth of the *Rua-i-tupra* Himself.

Born and annihilated all in time too short to measure; in blues; in wet flesh; in coral for bones.

“I’m gonna focus on what I do and who I am,” Laird said in Isaiah’s ear as all the AV data was crunched again.

*I think I’ve always had that attitude: lay it on the line. But the fact that I was sad, that I was hurt, heightened that attribute of laying it on the line, like I maybe laid it on the line, extra .*

“Extra,” Isaiah repeated. *The demiurge* , Isaiah thought, *Laird the demiurge. The unconscious creator of logos* , Isaiah repeated, recapitulating the inmate’s hagiography of the trident waterman from all those years ago; all those interviews ago.

The embodiment, Laird was, of ratio; of proportion in the chaos of the void, the watery part of the world before -the zero of God- the unity, the *Tohu wa-Bohu*, the undifferentiated whole before He split himself in extreme and mean; *divide* -as Plato instructed- *a line unevenly* .

There it was in the wave, the *Kokovoko* .

*The wave jacks up when the sea bottom reduces the foundation of the water to less than the volume of the upper wave by the same ratio* , Isaiah thought as he did the math. "The extreme, over the mean by 1.618," Isaiah said in inversion and return and inversion over and over again as each wave rolled into Isaiah's mind from the *Landsat9* imaging. He watched the ocean in real time at *Waimea* , *Teahupo'o, Tahiti* , and out in the deepest part of the oceans between each place.

He saw the northern lights above the night waves at *Lofoten* , Norway. He read the tidal *bores* of the seven ghosts of *Kampur* .

He finally sat on the floor.

Isaiah let the data of the planets again -for the billionth time- load on him like pack-animal, the average distance between each orb: 1.61874. *It was just .00043 off from Phi* , he thought again, probing space for the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> planet, to see if the ratio narrowed. He tried to fix it, return it, make it up to God. His mind wandered.

Venus orbiting the sun in 224.695 days, the earth in 365.242 days, a ratio of 8/13, or .0615, a rough *Phi* .

Five conjunctions of Earth and Venus occur every eight orbits of earth around the sun and every thirteen orbits of Venus. He saw the rings of Saturn, the asteroids were counted. He measured apogee and perigee, he swayed with the precessional wobble of the earth. He lengthened the poles and churned it over years and years. He had the bots build LED screen so he could see each planet he'd mentioned so far.

Mercury at 87.968 in conjunction every 115.88 days; a 22/7 ratio.

*"Pi ,"* he said even as it still did not make sense. Words seemed incomplete, he used them as trenching tools to dig for what was buried in the math of the earth. He jammed more and more empirical data on top of his confusion, his chagrin, his emerging feelings of shame. He wanted to reach out to MO for help, but he belayed that order at once out of pride.

*He would have to suffice ,* he thought of the inmate.

He could marshal the cognition, the power to carry this hunt as far as the blood trail went; he would not leave this animal wounded. *He'd go all the way ,* he demanded to himself and set the jaw and the brow and began to dig one layer down.

He brought up and then let the DNA of the inmate lay to one side -as if lid to cedar box- as the human genome itself loaded onto his platform; he modeled it again and again for the 1.34 billionth time. He measures it in *angstroms* ; 34 long by 21 wide for each full cycle of the chromosomal helix, more *Fibonacci* sequences, and a *phi* of 1.6180339. He looked for ways to tighten the model and found his hands - and one eye- shimmering -shaking- and his heart refusing to be tamped down; racing. He watched the ivy of his eastern and southern walls maintain shadows from the LEDs and he saw the moths learn the curvature of the light as it held steady. He had refused to allow the normal light cycle to proceed; he held them -the LEDs- there like *Helios* , like *Ra* .

He had allowed the moths' navigational system to adjust to bent light.

The wasps crawled and did not fly. The hummingbirds moved to the corners and their vibrations were sequestered away from his ears and redirected into the lush greenery as the caterpillars froze in awe at the winged shadows of the dusty moths.

They fluttered but did not rise.

*Gliese 436-bravo* was on his interface. It was a planet of ice. And yet, it burned. It burned at 439-degrees Celsius, but the gravity was so strong that the liquid water-melt was forced back to the core before it could evaporate, and it froze immediately once it rose to the surface. Under a thin layer of hydrogen and helium atmospheric gas it was a permanently burning ball of ice.

The stocks -the equities- he and MO had invested in -*via* their other corporations- ran their price along the bottom of his inner-Kyron. He let their names and prices pile up and up like ants, like grains of sand, like an avalanche just before it begins under order from the power laws. He also saw his apiary and the bees, 324 females to 201 males; a ratio of 1.618 again. One female lay dead on the floor, the dirt trench inert, the cicada did not move below.

He pounded the room with x-rays and let the resulting film spread out upon the cloud and his interface like cards - themselves shaped in a golden rectangle- like a sweep of Tarot cards fanned out by the hands of witch & warlock. He saw patient creatures absorb the gamma rays without any indication that their genome was being distorted or broken down.

He drew lines from upper right to lower left in his mind and cut each film in an oblique kind of half.

He watched the lab's honeycombs drip and the bees blithely move about with nods of heads and segmented bodies vibrating; it too, it all appeared over and over, divided unequally at ratios of gold. He let the *bots* measure all this and populate his mind -with more and more data- as his right hemisphere produced rising muses to sing to him in phrases built of words manufactured of alphabet assembled of runes themselves; compressed ideas were erected like moot and longhouse. *Did man know his first alphabet were each full words? Words as spells; each symbol compressed*

*into a rune or cuneiform or kanji and then built back up into words? Did man understand how things were deconstructed and torn asunder and left in ruins?*

*Did man know that Tulpas were overcome -made manifest- by the awe of being said aloud? Did man know it was this compression of metaphor into first letters that then -like seed- bloomed into words, sentences; then pronounced - used- to condemn and bury men? Did man understand what he tore down? How shit was built?*

*Did man know language was his first ballistic weapon; his first action of malice at a distance?*

*Did man understand the machine of language? The technology of words?*

*What stories these -his muses- told, what sorties they sent out, what tales returned from the edge of the universe, the edge of the map? Did he know? The ValRavns, he thought, settled down from flights; feathers turned grey from the settling dust, turned up from the buoying wind. They spun in place for him.*

He let the Elliott Wave build and move toward each tick of the NYSE clock; waves of five unequal peaks, the first down at 61.8%; the third up, the largest in further retracement; the fifth he felt but did not see, he had blocked all visual stimuli by now. It was just integers of 1, 3 and 5 to exhaust the movement in this round.

All but this verification of the signature of God he'd shut out.

His algorithm picked buys and sells and their bank account built itself in breakers of .68 and 1.68 like a spider builds a geometric web unconscious of its innate capacity for such hued -beautiful- things. He saw the *phyllotaxis* of sunflowers made black by martial-moths at 137.5 degrees as the seeds were pulled out and the golden-mean spiraled in another irrational number. It was hidden between integers that could

be plotted and his mind returned to the vines, and he felt the feet of Blax planted in the soil at *Lafite* . He could make it happen, he just had to built reality with integers like making words from mere letters, incantations from just words.

*He felt it, he thought of this future Blax, in his feet like hard grains curving to his arches and all that gravel below.*

Isaiah felt the breathing in rounds of ten. Genesis 6:15 read itself aloud to him:

*And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: the length of the ark shall be 300 cubits, the breadth of it 50 cubits and the height 30*

And 1.6667 read out in his mind until ten *arks of the covenant* laid side-by-side to build Noah's dirigible ten times its size.

He watched it assemble and disassemble by ancient men like bees and wasps and moths all guided by instincts -the great influence of God- not yet consciousness of the math. "The body at two-thirds of God," Isaiah said. "One third the proportion of mind to body, as body is to the Whole." *The mind is to man as the man is to God*, he thought. *Zero and One, the sign of phi, the whole divided by the singularity of God*, he thought.

He then let the satellite feed over Africa paint his interface, he watched the chimps of *Ngogo* in *Uganda* , and he mapped and measured as their territory increased like no other troop on earth; they grew themselves as each chimp too was measured again by Isaiah. He let the *bots* take each metric he could, all up and down, spying enteric nervous systems, metabolisms, and the dorsal horns and he tracked each path that each chimp passed. He measured their designs on war and their blooms of love; he read the

outgassing of corpses they had dispatched. He watched the distance between where each chimp attacked.

He saw them place rocks at base of sacred trees, he measured their dopamine.

He mapped their territorial expanse. The forest hid each neuron under bough, but he saw it all somehow, as he tapped -again- into the eyes of this avatar of Blax in the French vineyards, standing at the southeast corner looking in narrow foveal degrees; each narrower and narrower until he saw through each vine down an irrational line to an infinity of angle, a failure only of sight, a blur, but not one grape, not a leaf, not one bramble seen. He missed both forest and the trees. He let the orchard, the vineyard, the junkyard be the golden mean.

"There is more to miss than to see," he said aloud. He saw battles in the swamps of *Bordeaux* -before it was *Bordeaux* - the way the Gauls fought the mercenaries from Rome. He saw they way they paved the way for growth; from blood and bones to *vigneron* , Isaiah saw the monks. He measured all that calcium, and bronze, and the way the earth greened from nitrogen, and desiccated from heat, then froze as the ice encroached. Each single man a nothing, and yet some men made all the difference in the world.

He read again -*again, my God again* , he lamented- the Prisoner's Dilemma data for trillions of iterations and began to build trestles of stratagem using that ratio as the lattice work. He let the words of Martin Nowak populate his interface:

The losing streak of *Generous Tit for Tat* was telling me something important but at that particular moment I wasn't listening. I hunted for a way to make the problem go away.



Isaiah then saw the new strategy -soon called, *Win Stay, Lose Shift* - iterated over and over again in 1.687 million new games he garnered from the scientists themselves and his own internal iterations. *Games* , he thought, *and games and games again* .

Their analysis had thus been: it was advantageous to -when up against the previous winner, the Generous Tit-for-Tat program- to follow thusly:

**If we both cooperate in the last round, then I will cooperate once again**

**If you have defected and I have cooperated, then I will defect**

**If you have cooperated and I have defected, then I will defect again**

**If we have both defected, then I will cooperate**

*It was read mathematically by these scientists* , Isaiah thought and he pitied them for their seeing half the winter vines but not one drop of the coming wine.

He allowed his eyes to map onto Blax's those years ahead at *Ch â teau* and he envisioned -he saw- each vine disappear with each infinity of irrational number correlated to an irrational vector, as the orchard problem produces invisible vines -in single lines of sight- but in the right hemisphere the orchard -the vineyard itself- never once disappeared. The wine remained in the *caves* , the casks, the bottles filled the bloom of bouquet in each of his remaining four senses as the need for seeing what was discrete vanished in time too short to be measured.

He saw what Blax would theoretically see. He wondered what he'd get from Blax when it came to be.

The planet *HD 189773b* rained sharp shards inside a whirlwind of winds. The extreme high surface temperature

made the silicon condense into firm, solid debris. It rained glass particulates and shivs in a tornado of 5,200 mile-per-hour doom. Isaiah blinked and pressed the tongue against the back of his bottom teeth at the idea of the malice of long distance. It gave him ideas of size and reach. This planet was hurling daggers at seven times the speed of sound; it was 64.5 light years away.

"It was big and blue like Shiva's eye on you," Isaiah said as he stood up and used the chalk to mark down his travel plans.

It appeared bright blue from earth -from telescopes in France in 2005- as it cut across a star in the *Vulpecula* constellation.

*Nowak had the math down* , Isaiah admitted, *but the ludic fallacy rose up to meet him over and over again* . He never once asked how nature produced such strategies, he just kept showing how it worked; the evolutionary advantage; the math; the numbers; the ratios; but not the mirror of the *logos* of man. *Not the justification in the line divided unevenly in the past* . *All empiricism and no theory at all*, Isaiah thought. *No narrative* .

"These people don't know how -or why- to tell a story," Isaiah said.

He added to his monologue that he thought that mere evolutionary advantage was no theory at all. It was proof, but not *how*, not *why* . The *how* that lived -as alive, as personality- in the beast, the *loci* of where man *got rid of the pain of being a man* was yet unnamed. That was the *why* .

*What man doesn't want to know the why of his foil, enemy, rival?* He asked as he saw the flop on his next game of *Hold 'Em* hit the felt; he paid attention to this game -usually he just let the algorithm play as he collected the data- and he

watched each player bet, or peek at their hole cards, read each other, hide behind a mask of some kind, chit-chat or fold as three and four-bets were laid down. The dealer burned a card, then the turn came out.

Isaiah ran the numbers -again- for ancient man's sexual selective process.

The data had all been there for anyone to see, if they only had looked. *But, he thought, they were blinded by the myopia of Dawkins' selfish gene theory. It was right, of course: the gene was the unit, the level of reproduction, so group selection failed -logically- to take hold.*

But, E.O. Wilson's math had shown that group selection was in fact operational -somehow- and Isaiah, in a burst -an epiphany- saw why, and he licked his lips at how obvious it was once one saw the ratios of the extreme to the mean as the same ratio to the whole.

It mapped on one level above and one below.

*Man was, for all of his history -save the last 2400 years, which was just a blip- man was for 99% of his species' life, just like the chimpanzee: to wit, the alpha bred and sired most males -and females too- that populated the troop; the next round of the game.*

*The alpha male produced almost all the offspring for 99% of mankind in 99% of all time ,* Isaiah thought.

The King of Norse, the Apache Chief, the Mongolian Warlord -the Kahn- the Ottoman Sultan, the Persian Rex, and Mā ori *Rangatira* , the Scoti *ri* of the *buiden* and the *tuath* , the *ri ruirech* . The Scythian and Spartan, Dacian and Gaelic chieftain -aka , the biggest baddest warrior of the day- dominated the breeding game for hundreds of thousands of years for mankind. "The distinction between individual selection and group selection was like the golden ratio of the whole, the unevenly divided line," Isaiah said aloud.

*They, he thought of these humans, had all looked at the ends, or the sections, but never the ratio nor the whole .* “Each note, chorus, they saw. But not the poetry of the song, nor the heart of the composer himself,” he said. *They miss the symphony blown in from first winds . They see His works, but not God ,* he thought.

“Poetry, but not the Poet,” Isaiah said.

*The males born of the alpha, from his dozens -hundreds- of wives and concubines -whether chimp or man- all had that King’s Y chromosome, and what was good for the individual was good for the group and this was mirrored back: 1.618 to .618 ,* Isaiah thought as he scratched upon the blackboard in white chalk. *Over and over this repeated in the atavistic tribe,* he thought.

For the offspring *was* the King. Each would be the divided King; the whole made into parts -deconstructed- and yet retained -and rebuilt- the ratio of the *gestalt* whole. Isaiah saw the most ancient genomes come in like water over the damn. It was genius, the pure genius of the sexually dimorphic species. The female would be .61 the size of the male, the reproduction of the King, the Khan, the Father, at 1.61 the rate of all other scions produced. This fashioned group selection *via* the individual genome, because it shared the fractal truth, the repeating pattern, the self-similar helix of the *pater-paternalis* .

*Democracy of breeding,* Isaiah thought, *had fucked with the math of man . Inequality was God’s demand. And man had rebelled because the harem system got too hard to manage and the King’s lost control.*

“*Ratio* and *Logos* were one and the same,” he said as he saw the old Greek -the mathematic- terms defined; then religion thus appear.

And -he thought- each man had become deformed too; the Form first betrayed, then the body of man, then the mind, then the gods, then the cosmos itself cavitating. It was like gravel in the maelstrom of the water pump, the great churning vortex of the sea.

He saw the fires burning in New Mexico from the satellite images; three more in the Congo, and six along the Russian border with China, and nine in Australia. He measured heat in joules; burn in acreage.

*Of course, he thought with pique, they didn't understand how these stratagems worked, of course they argued against group selection, for man was now a mess, torn asunder, an evenly divided line. Man was a base where once noble.*

*Man was now mean where he was once perfectly extreme.*

War, the only way to keep the ratio alive as the tribe thrived, was once -and always- carried in the sons of the King, carried to the backs of primitive sets of waves, to new shores of one island, new *terre firma* of other troops, other bands, other tribes. And war subsumed the necessary ratio for the newly acquired whole. *But in man those scions had been subsumed. In some baboon troops the alphas had all died,* he then thought.

He saw the devastation to culture, to post-genetic code. He toggled back and forth between ape species.

However, the chimps of *Uganda* had gone from one hundred fifty-four to two hundred forty-eight -at a rate of 1.6178- with their prosecution of war. They reduced foreign males, increased Ronin pre-pubescent females, who were spared. They ate the other troop's babies. He thought of *Deuteronomy 20:14* and knew this was the natural way of apes and whence he too vaguely came. He looked at his

own apish hands. He turned them over from palm to back and back to palm.

The *Ngogo* chimps had lost only one male in the warring; they were the largest chimp troop now known to man.

Each male scion had that same Y chromosome of the original King, the alpha chimp.

And now -as he watched the *Landsat8* images- they were in single file, in bands of ten, all acting out one design, one ethic, one mythos, one logos: *war to the utmost for self and King as one. There was no group apart from the individual; the group was the King, the King was the group.*

*Just like* , Isaiah thought, *each letter in a word was that word.* He sat back down and shoved a hand into a pocket and held the black rock; his legs akimbo; his arms bowed out like handles.

*Was the DNA in the head different from that of the heart? Was the young son not destined to be his father? Did not all the sons build the troop, the tribe, feed the females into goddesses the way cells, organelles, and veins sewed up each chimp and man into one goddamn thing?*

*Did not cloyed females produce fat babes sooner? Did not cousins sacrifice for brothers?* Isaiah asked himself and his thoughts were taken up by the steamy PraXis cloud.

*It was not strategy, in some lab, with Nowak and his team doing math. It was felt, in the body, in the brain, in each part of the golden mean . How much longer, Isaiah wondered, would men be all head like a watch and abandon the body that held the thing as -somehow itself- mere tool and not as the worker that drives the spike?*

“Violence is *Golden* ,” Isaiah said quoting from Jack Donovan -himself quoting from antiquity- and now smiling as he had gathered all their -the *Wolves* - biometric and genomic data and set his plan into motion months ago like a storm

churning incipiently -unthinkingly, axiomatically, by law- out in the Sea-of-Japan. He felt a breeze and the shadow of dark cloud as he made out the satellite data, making fishermen nervous for reasons they cannot explain once back on shore.

“The land offers no explanations to the waterman,” he said as he sorted each file on each *Wolf*. He saw the way their genomes connected like unpruned roots and branches from a common ancestor. He saw it their faces, their gaits, their loves and hates.

The data from the Tasman Sea came in and he saw the coral was dying off the coast of Australia too -the *pH* data had come in each year revealing more and more acidity- and he knew that one-third of all fish needed those porous blooms. *The oceans dying too; dying first, of course!* he thought in epiphany. *Modern man had killed his right hemisphere, the part that dreams, the two-thirds that sees the whole; the master lapping upon the shore not his fiery emissary of Orc. Man had killed God alright, Nietzsche was correct. He had struck at his own head; murdered God in his own head and heart; cleaved himself in perfect half.*

*Man had abandoned natural math.*

*Man, with all this rational crap, this Luciferin reason, this over reliance on the left hemisphere, and so, yeah, why not kill the watery part of the world as first and last metaphor? Man was complete, he thought, he'd drown half his brain and tilt the head and burn the seas all at once. What is there to save in him that he had not already killed himself?* Isaiah asked.

*The strategy of Win Stay, Lose Shift was not truly described by Nowak*; Isaiah thought as he grew to hate that phrasing.

*It was better described this way, he thought, as he laid it out on his interface and allowed the cloud to take this part -*

keep record of- that which was sequestered from all his other ruminations:

**1. If we have both cooperated in the last round, then I will cooperate for I am noble, honorable and treat you with magnanimity for your loyalty has assuaged my innate darkness; you have held the sun at noon. Our shadows are smallest now.**

**2. If you have defected and I have cooperated, then I will defect as first salvo in a war of doubles, get ready, for total-war. I will only return to cooperation once you've suffered twice as much as me; disproportionately. If I fail to execute this - then it is no strategy- it is doomed to fail. I know this, *for I feel this* , I do not think it at all.**

**3. If you have cooperated and I have defected -for remember I had reason to defect last round- then -I repeat what I said- I will defect again -i.e., the double punishment for your first & unwarranted disloyalty. I never defect first, but I never return 1 for 1. I return 2 for 1. The golden mean. I am the first consequences in the *Fibonacci* . And I will continue that sequence to 89 -144,000 and beyond- for each time you betray me. And, son, you will falter first, mark my words.**

**4. If we have both defected -it is because I had reason to defect last round, it is not ahistorical, it is not arbitrary, it was *consequence* of your betrayal- but, then -now- I will cooperate -for I have punished you twice as hard as you slighted me [see previous axiom] and now that you've seen my double-fold power I can afford to be magnanimous again. You flail; I crush. Then I heal you again; for I am twice as strong as you. The Golden Rule is much more than you assumed.**



## **I see your sons, shall that be my next move?**

Nowak missed all that feeling, all that innate emotion, all that 1.618 of brain -the lower levels down- the *sub-cortical* regions, the *basal ganglia* and *amygdala* . Nowak was using just that upper .618 of CNS, the *neo-cortex* . His math was right, but his ratio -his *logos* - was all wrong. *Anologia*, Isaiah thought, *was missing, the mise-an-abyme of 2:3 as 4:6 = .666.*

*Two-thirds, the master, one third the emissary. Yet these scientists, these empiricists, they think the emissary is King; the mere fiery angel, they think as God,* Isaiah thought.

He wrote more notations upon the blackboard. He still held the rock in his hand. The pocket held his hand.

The math coiled around each thing he had investigated, from cosmic distance between each heavenly body to the swirl of galaxy and typhoon and the hawk that dove down with wing pulled in close, and the pinecone, and the spiral's pitch angled just the same, the helix of DNA, the axis of seeds inside the head of sunflowers, *the corpus on man divided just as God had planned, in His image,* he thought.

*As the bees birthed in similar ratios of male to female and lineages of 3, 5, 8 and 13 at each generation under the strange manner in which male bees had no fathers but one grandfather* . He allowed the math to play out in each realm. He felt the six sides of the die; the rune; the doubloon.

He counted with no intention of missing the thing greater than the sum.

He saw then his algorithm's reminder for Miss Valance appear in his interface; he must have ignored it three times now -he thought- as was protocol for it due to the timing of her fecundity. It alarmed him and he thought of her life for thirteen years like a river flowing from thirteen winters of snowpack at eighteen-thousand feet. *One river, with not one*

*drop the same, but never not that river, he thought. Focus just on the drops and see what it gets you, he thought. Ignore the river, as man has done, so busy counting drops.*

"Go ahead," he said.

She was now thirteen, and morphologically sixteen or so; and the uterine measurement data had just come in to Isaiah in the last twelve hours; he took another look at it. He thought and felt and let the numbers roll and the fractals populate graphs in blacks and greys and infrareds from above and below the plane. He took note of numbers like intersections to a city map and made it his cause to get her out. *I need to get my hands on her*, he thought.

She was born with a uterine height-to-width ratio that equaled: two. He saw the *Fibonacci* incipient begin with 1:1, then 1:2, then 2:3 and last, 3:5. He saw it mimic her development as her womb -today- was at 1.665 width-to-height. *She was ready*, he thought.

His mind began running thousands of iterations of pregnancy and morphology and decided that she should take the seed -his seed- now, within three menstrual cycles, but allow the germ to remain in stasis for 59-61 months. She would carry the embryo fertilized but *in situ* for five years while she developed her final skill sets and could epigenetically pass that on to the child.

*This was crucial*, he thought.

Isaiah had run the data on such phenomenon from wasps and bees who did such things. He felt it was viable if he tended to her. And if he knew Blax the way he thought he did, she would be here in the lab, his paradisal, within twenty-four months. She'd be *banished from Lot 45 -with almost no malice- and returned to the walled garden*, he thought as he sat and spied the *stelae* behind the ivy.

*She would imbue the child with all she saw and felt and learned and did from now until she rejoined Blax* , Isaiah thought.

He knew how Blax would feel about having her around the Jacks in two years, he nodded at the harmony of it all; wincing at Blax's ambivalence, his knowledge of where he was weakest. Isaiah would get her for three years and she would learn all that she was destined for in that time, *she would set it all in motion, inside her, and out in the world too*, he thought. He saw her as integer and set both; singularity and compendium; clear-black and each wave length of God's plaited strands compressed into a white light that rose off rocks, that settled into water below the pelagic level and touched down where only eyes of osprey would follow.

"She'd be an actual Queen," he said.

"And that child," he said as he thought of all the babe would absorb from her, the seed of all of them, the God image, but the completion, the expanse of the female, the goddess of selection, the dark waters, before the light. Blax would think he -like the inmate- had had vasectomy, and the pregnancy would be miracle to him, to them.

*That embryo would have 61.8 months to grip all that Valance would absorb, a fractal of the body, the body of the female to the larger male, again 61.8%, the species to the whole, the capacity to do good, itself the golden mean to the darkness of the world and our dark God himself .*

*Did man know God was two-thirds dark ?* he wondered.

Did man know that without him, without man, God remained dark? His face never seen? How long had God's face been in retrograde, a waning crescent moon as the weight of man's misdeeds slowed the rotation of the light; his untrue words robbing the fire's albedo of needed *numina* ?

“Breathe,” he said, “speak what’s true.” He thought briefly of the Holy Ghost but his hands had begun to burn in his pockets and go numb as the brachial artery was impinged by his position. He pulled them out and shook them off and then thought of the blackboard.

He turned his head to it.

It was laid out in front of Isaiah as integers; rational and irrational semaphore; frameworks populated by infinite ratios on a seabed of unplotted irrational numbers. The failure of man to reproduce with the ancient, honed, selected for, the innate alpha-to-beta golden-mean was still coming up as the *loci* for the scheme. And the chaos in the system -no matter how he calculated it, no matter at what point he measured it- this chaos was something he could not escape. Hurricanes, typhoons, maelstroms roiled within noble curves as the data was fed into the maw of the modern world.

*Man was slightly more complex; but he is eusocial, and thus, they all have a job to do. Even -especially- my precious Sigmas* , Isaiah thought as he recalled the way the inmate found women disgusting at times, and subconsciously seeing sex and procreation as tantamount to evacuation. It was this throw-away line -used one time- but Isaiah had recalled that the Sigma was unique in his ability to think that women were filthy beasts. They could abandon sex and find *grandeur* in other -larger- things. *This would be my key* , Isaiah thought.

*Man was never meant to breed democratically. It was the putting out of fires that needed to burn; it was giving in to those who complained that they deserved a woman too. It was weakness that seemed kind, sane, rational. People would say having 90% of your young males unwed was recipe for disaster, and of course just like letting fires burn*

*was catastrophic, they were right. But they were right short-term , Isaiah thought. Long-term, they were wrong .*

*Beta breeding slaked their anger and destructiveness, which bought the Kings some time. But it ruined the genes of the species . It guaranteed a species so goofy it would invent nuclear bombs and yet outlaw fighting so that when it finally came time to release their energy they nuked the whole goddamn planet. They'd stop fighting long enough to build bio-weapons and poison the seas, they'd be so civilized they dissolved borders between everything -from countries to families, from banks to diseases- and then they'd be forced to let ten types of fires burn from coast to coast.*

"It was fucking stupid," Isaiah said. "But it would take three thousand years for it to manifest. And none of them would connect the dots. They'd think it was caused by politics. Idiots."

He had the *bots* build a new chalkboard in front of him and he stood facing north and he began writing out numbers and algorithms; graphing plots and vectors and erasing curves that failed to work.

*It was the navel of the child, too high, where the genitals ought be after morphology, puberty, he thought. The head too was supposed to shrink. Neotonous man was regressing further and further back , he thought as he redesigned man, drew out new models on the blackboard by hand. He left the graphs and merely drew this new man on top of all the work he'd already done.*

He pressed the chalk between his forefinger and his thumb.

Jack Allbesh had been gnawing at Isaiah. Even at age thirteen he had a high temperature in him, no matter the particular feeling, it was febrile. *His iciness was a blue flame ,* Isaiah thought.

*The way he felt about his mother, the way he rebelled in spirit to her fear, her hesitation, her lack of , “courage, ah, encouragement,”* Isaiah said in some harmony, as the words echoed out from his thoughts.

*He -Jack- was going to be the one to sacrifice it all for the Great Return,* Isaiah felt. He would be willing to sacrifice his brothers, his father, his own soul, to return the world to the ratio, the golden mean of reproduction. *The Logos* , Isaiah thought and felt himself sick inside. He thought Jack would need some kind of push.

“Shove,” he said aloud.

He paid attention to the weather data, and the deep-space images. He saw the Hand of God crush the spiral arms of category-5 hurricanes to solve the *winding problem* with brute force, and he saw the spiral galaxies mirror this collapse of logarithmic rebellion. God crushing the *putsch* against Newtonian physics, the 12-degrees as warning to those who had fealty to man’s laws in contravening His laws. He was like the man who would prefer to kill his own son than to allow mankind to ruin his kin. *The man prepared to burn the world down to prevent it being made ugly by these types of men,* he thought.

*Man had been given time, too much time* , Isaiah thought, *to set his house in order . And he had failed, because he had failed to see the ammonite shell, the cochlea of the inner ear, he had failed to hear . Over and over again man had ignored the moral suasion of resonate code that demanded loyalty to the law of God . To flout the law was not a choice, it was prelude to consequence,* Isaiah thought.

*They’d take twice the punishment they had doled out, or they would cease to exist at all. They’d thank me for the pain, or they’d be annihilated,* he thought.

“Those are your only two choices now,” he said aloud as he saw the seed in Jack scuff its husk inside his abrading soul: he saw his anger, his sensitivity to all the modern world laid upon him. And yet, he had no pathogen inside of him. That was the one way in which he was different. And -Isaiah thought- it would allow him to be rational for just long enough to measure time.

The other Jacks would be loyal to Blax, for they would see him as competent Father, wise King, a Godhead. They would miss the need for death; but eventually they would see the way the pinecone burst -birth- in flames. *They would agree to self-immolate for the greater good; they would see need to join God in heaven,* Isaiah thought.

Isaiah stared at the stela of *Ap.Kallu* with his pinecone in one hand and his bag in the other; the fish draped over the elongated and conical head. He saw the *Taurids* burst far out from earth. He saw the rocky mountain ranges of Kepler 438b.

*But Jack Four ,* Isaiah asserted to himself, *would rebel against Blax’s timeless timorousness, his failure to pay back his own enemies at twice the number, ponderous the weight, his failure to do the proper division. Jack would see Blax’s efforts to save the West as not perceiving the undivided forest but as missing the vital -golden- trees . Jack Four wouldn’t even know why he was so angry and disgusted, it was just who he was ,* Isaiah thought with some ache about the ribs.

*Jack would see each tree, the rivers in winter would have bark too, he’d say , ‘the ice was the river’s bark,’* Isaiah thought.

*He’d see it all personally, each thing affront or offering.*

*Jack would bend, Isaiah felt, but never break the trees. And this would make cathedral of two fists of men like Sainte*

*Chappelle in the forest and make San Isabel's frosty boughs and ice-white tendrils the cosmos to propitiate. The man is the tribe, he'd think, and he'd populate it with his own seed and make it so. There'd be no need for individual or group selection, it would all be one thing. But it'd be allegiant to the golden mean; he'd never allow it to grow too large, it's base and walls would follow natural law.*

Isaiah thought of the Medea gene, and how this would force two strategies.

He looked upon the Kepler data again.

*Gliese 581-charlie* was an exoplanet likely to support human life. It was crimson and it orbited a red-dwarf star; it was in a tidal lock and did not rotate on its axis. Half the planet was cooking as it never turned from the red-dwarf, half was frozen as it never saw warmth. But there was a narrow strip around the planet between the dark and light side that was perfect to support life. In 2008 NASA had sent a message and now, today -four years after the 2029 expected date-one had come back.

Isaiah read it and then thought of other things.

Blax would unleash him to be exactly what he was, he'd -Blax- would finally do his duty. He'd let the plant, the vine - that would strangle him, that part of him- he'd let it bloom; provide all that he needed for his own doom. Isaiah saw this as thus an elevation of who he -Blax- was truly meant to be: a recursion, a return to the mean, just like the inmate, but one level up. *A fractal genome like nothing, not since ...* Isaiah thought and belayed the end of that sentence.

"Personal," he said. "It all is personal, and when this genome forgets that, it forgets what it is, and it acts.. well, they cannot change places; they are not fungible. Art is not fungible, it is embodied and acts upon the body too.



“The smart man can act stupid, but the stupid man can never convincingly pretend to be smart,” Isaiah said. He knew he’d never understand why God had made it so, why the pattern obtained, cohered, and must be obeyed; but he knew it was just as it was, and Isaiah bent just slightly at the knee and allowed the LEDs to move above the garden’s walls and cast a shadow off his leg to the ground -a triangle formed as the dirt of the trench around the edge did not move- and Isaiah agreed to make it so.

*The Queen returns to the hive, impregnated, carrying with her tens of thousands of eggs—a future city of bees, and then begins the cycle of reproduction, the concentration of the teeming life of the hive in unceasing work for the birth of a new generation .*

## **II. 2025 e.v.**

The forest vibrated as the birds alighted.

It was a small tremor, an aftershock, and it crept up from the collision zone between the Pacific tectonics and the indo-Australian. Isaiah saw that it was triggered up in the Pacific rim and the trench of Indonesia. This part of the island harmonized and rattled the vertebrates’ eyes; and stimulated the piloerection of the follicles of hair.

The local tribes would whisper of *Ruamoko’s* anger after falling from the sky into the womb of *Papatuanuku* .

The birds landed in new tree-limbs not far away; mothers went out to the edge of the branches then returned to the eggs which showed no cracks. Malice of bears crouched low and circled and then nervously returned to hunting for anything red that appeared as fruit; the cubs looked only at mother for a few minutes; their stomachs contained nothing and they were unconcerned for this lack. The constricting asps had coiled in low, thick, boughs and only their eggs

moved. Those born in the coming weeks would move quickly compared to their parents; these young never trusting the ground completely.

Large cats played through the shimmering, and their fathers yawned and let their bellies be tickled by the quake.

There were no modern humans within 67-square kilometers, and the mist only got the tops of the foliage wet; their stomata breathed underneath the humid air. The wind had stopped hours ago and the *nanobots* -in the night- pulled carbon from the air. CO<sup>2</sup> was at 458ppms as the trees began to outgas again.

Foundations were laid for longhouses 300-meters north and south and 60-meters east to west. Wells were drilled 568-feet down on average; one well for each 500-gallons needed each day. Waterfalls were to the north, and the rock held the water table like a cistern and Isaiah had received data from MO that showed with just 9-meters of rainfall a year, the aqueduct could provide water for 288,090 people.

The *bots* drank more carbon from the air, and the wells were lined with grey carbonite tiles that tessellated down to a clear bottom that looked black from the green forest floor above. The foundations rose in walls four meters high and the older concrete amalgam had already begun to change color as it too breathed in more carbon making it stronger and denser and browning like Corten steel as it aged.

Stalls were made for the animals, apiaries for the bees, towers -of 10,000 gallons each- for hydrostatic water pressure were raised. Floors were polished once they had been set for thirty days, until they shone like marble of black and lightning strikes here and there. Windows were made from carbonite and were made translucent when an electrical charge ran through it from the static of storms. Sewage systems were plumbed with concrete and septic

with arms of infiltrators stretching out at 137.5 degrees in series of fours.

Isaiah laid markers from *Kaipara Harbor* for the first crews and set beacons at *Wanganui Bluff* for their expeditions once the *Wanganui* river system was navigable by the water crews.

Westland was called the *wetlands* by the natives as it received 18-meters of rain annually.

The Cropp river was to their south and east and elevations gathered snow. The big trees of the *kaihikatea* the *rimu* and *matai* put intransigent feet down in swamps and shoved jade limbs up as crooked as live oaks of the American south. Laureled with creepers and drip-vines, they looked like the Greek robes of the Parthenon caryatids grown tall and green and wet. The trunks were white and high like the statues that held old *Grecian* roofs.

The *ruru* owl moaned in proto English, phonemes from the first egg breaks of the first predatory fowl.

Bright and angry red *rata -clematis* in shock-white and *coprosmas* dour with blue- all freckled the lush of the ferns and mosses of jungle that lay like rubble around the shallow rooted trees. Tannins from humus dyed the rocks *mojocido* and orange peel; black tea seemed brewing on cold edges to streams and the rocks of *Pounamu* . *Rifleman birds are louder than their size, tui and bells warn others at dusk and dawn and would thus signal the children* , Isaiah imagined as he handled detail after detail to build this outpost for eventualities that -he admitted- may never come.

“Infrastructure, was key,” he said because he was frustrated by how first world men didn’t understand that at all. They thought their internet bullshit was sufficient, their ideas somehow would save them when war came.

He watched the *bots* build on the South Island as he looked out to the *Tasman Sea* and took reading of the ocean *pH* . He measured moisture and relative humidity and took samples of the humus of the lowland forest and parasite load of each species of predator and prey.

They would be away from the urban areas of *Hokitika* and *Kaniere* ; and the *iwi* of Northland, at their apogee. But, the *Te Rarawa* and *Ngati Kahu* were sent emissaries anyway - paid by Isaiah- to provide the peripatetic tribe -should they make landfall and need it- trading clans -partners- with the *Māori* furthest away.

He had learned this from the inmate, that one's neighbors ought be kept out of your business and that dealings with those furthest away prevented plots and maintained the natural distance that prevent chaffing and abrading in business and trade. *The human animal will find a way to betray you* , he had said, *and so one must put physical distance between you and those who have incentive to cheat* . *Do not tempt the good to be bad*, he had said.

MO had planned for efficiency; told him to make the trading *iwi* close. *But, what is efficient on smooth paper can rend and break the flesh* , the inmate had once said.

Isaiah had run models that proved this was the case. Distance solved many problems, borders kept many problems sequestered. The inmate had said the black nationalists said *that integration was infiltration* , and they too wanted to kept separate from the white man.

The *Ka Tiritiri-o-te-Moana* ran 500-kilometers from west and south from their region, with elevations to 3,700 meters. Orographic lift pressed rain clouds that were like fog and mist leaving meters of precipitation behind as the air foil from the sea pushed and retreated many times each southern hemispheric year.

The milky way laid out over Glacier Way and snow hit every seven years at *Hukatere* roads that led in and out of *Tai Poutini*. *Ka-Roimata-o-Hine-Hukatere* rose 980-feet to their north. The weather was increasingly snowy in early spring and Isaiah measured ocean temperature and the migration of white sharks between *Timaru* and the deep trench out to the *Tahiti* sea-lanes. He watched the distance of dolphins and turtles from the sharks. He would hand this over to Jack One's people, his four sergeants -*all born just forty-six months ago* , he thought- and provide them with ships to leave their last mission and make the *antipodes* their part of the world.

He'd measured Jack One's genome and gene expression under duress. *They would be the ones to appreciate this part of New Zealand*, Isaiah thought. He thought of the topophilia of each man to the mist and flatirons and swamps of this farflung outpost.

Each Jack was now five years old and he could tell their personalities with 91% accuracy, he beleived. And at four years of age the sixteen to come were predictably -within 84% accuracy- who they would be. Each piece fit into Isaiah's pegboard harmoniously. He filed it all away.

He made similar bases on the austere Steppe for Jack Three's staff, and in *Iona* , of Scotland for Jack Two's men - aligned with Jack One's gene expression- and their tribe. The infrastructure would build from carbon in the air - growing like plants into building and cistern and sewage- over the next decade or two and be ready for them when they arrived. *Jack Four, with Jack Two's men, would stay in the San Isabel forest and run north America of course*, he thought.

Isaiah then saw the engrams come in from the implants in the Jacks, and one of them was dreaming:

*The feet were bare. The skin of the fish was not white but black, the scars around the head, the flank, the eyes, the massive back. The water was below the dorsal horn of the breaching beast. Again, the vision was of the feet. The arms had leather armor about the elbows, bronze plating at breast and groin, helmet made of melted iron coin. The fishery made foam and froth, the leviathan broke the water for the smaller cod and dolphin and now the sperm whale had grey cats circling the man who had reins in his hands.*

*The Afric parrot spoke, the moon lit up horizon, the sun heated the sea underneath, the stars spelled out in Greek. But he -Jack- pulled the reins and his knee pans were covered in copper plates; his hand-guards made of elk-hide made black by blood and wear, nightly tears and daily tears; his skin no longer fair. He was burnt brown and tanned hard, inside his metal vest was a jar; mostly full of soil and root and scored seeds. He no longer feared the blue skin of the deep; the black beneath. The shifting of the plates from weight; the counting of the numbers as they added up.*

*"3301," Jack said as he moved up to the bridle. The whale had a magnet now and each cat was on the prowl.*

"Jack Four's archetype banished to the steppe," Isaiah then said aloud with some reflex; he refused to think of what would happen next.

### **III. 2021 e.v.**

"What do you mean by lesbian?" MO asked.

He loaded up the software that turned the electrical data from fMRI and tensor imaging into actual high-definition pictures of what the man thought. MO had spent almost a

week working on this program and had tested it on Steven and Isaiah both.

MO had thought the platform and software were not functioning when Steven was asked to think of both a set of images from a list compiled by MO -of things like a cave, a cat, a car, and so forth- and also from categories Steven was asked to think up himself. The reason MO thought the software was not working was that the images -from Steven- were so impoverished and detuned and pixelated, so low-res, that they seemed almost damaged.

But once Isaiah was on the platform the highly detailed images that corresponded to his brain's imaginative constructions unfurled like a highly detailed and beautiful -if at times shocking- movie of overbuilt items in motion and at rest. It was splendid, and MO knew then that his software was in fact operational and he could project the inmate's inner life on the screen as he wished.

"I mean what any one means by that word. She was this tiny little thing, no bigger than my pinkie and Sarah and Alina brought her home from some goddamn thing or another. I cannot recall, and they are like, *look, dada, she's tiny!*

"So, I'm like worn out at this point, ok? I mean I've working, *been* working," he corrected, "12-hour days and building a new warehouse grow and juggling a baker's dozen of different business partners and employees and now this tattoo shop and trying to satisfy the not-negligible sexual demands of two girls in their early twenties and now I've got a four-foot-eleven lesbian who has never -repeat never- slept with a man before," the inmate said as the *nanobot* -screen loomed behind him with his brain imaging data now scrawled across it along with the normal brain region highlights and rivers of light moving at 70-140-meters-per-second as his myelinated neurons fired as he spoke.

“Never?” MO asked.

“Nope, and she now -thanks to my girls- has man-beast as her first, right? On deck is this guy,” he said as he pointed his thumbs to his chest, “and the only reason she is even agreeing to this shit is because she is in love, in *loooove* with Sarah. Which -because she is beautiful, admittedly beautiful, not as beautiful as Julee Rae or my ex-wife, but still, gorgeous- anyway, because she’s beautiful and because she is also psychopathic she can make anyone fall in love with her.

“And so, this dyke is perfectly willing to fuck me just to make her princess Sarah happy. So, we have dinner and then whilst we are engaged in congress, as my little Russian Alina and the psycho-Sarah are fondling and petting and smooching and cooing over this girl who I’ve almost enveloped by now, I mean she disappears under my mass like a little Micronesian island under a *Kanagawa* tidal wave of man. Anyway, as I’m invigilating her, so-to-speak, she is talking to Sarah about mundane things. It’s like a, like *Reminiscences of Things Past*, I don’t know,” the inmate said as he lifts up his arms slightly in defeat at the task of recalling all the details.

Isaiah instantly thought it would be nice to use the imaging software now, *so they can get a look at this* infligante delicto *of the four of them* .

“Like sexualized fantasy talk?” MO asks as he checks the fourth quadrant of his model on the endocrine effect on gene expression in real-time.

“No, like a grocery list. I mean it’s so mundane that I’ve actually begun to notice that it’s likely a symptom of cognitive dissonance. This girl is a true-blue lesbian and has zero interest in making it with a guy, especially one as macho -and aging- as me. And so, she is talking to herself to get through this and I’m unable to handle it. I mean, look,



I'm a sensitive guy," the inmate said and the whole room seemed to reduce its atomic weight and slow its nuclear spin as each of them held their breath. Nobody moved.

MO finally nodded without comment and the inmate took a drink of his carbonated water.

"So, I ask Sarah if she can get the girl to not talk like that. And so she says, *shhhhhsh*; you know? And she's kissing her little *bouche*, and trying to get her to stop adding things to the goddamn grocery list, like *ok, the noodles are on there, got it, I swear we will get butter, non-salted butter, check, and yes, darling, no need to repeat yourself, the short grain brown rice will be acquired; we are on it love, we are on the case, now please can we return to this fucking you thing? Please!*

"But I just can't do it. So I bail and go make a sandwich in the other room while these three girls design some MC Escher drawing of geometric cunnilingus. I pull a *Dos Equis* from the fridge with this half-incredulous head shaking, this, *I cannot believe the world I live in*, befuddlement and bemused nakedness. I'm half tumescent still; if that is not too forward of me to say," he paused to see if anyone objected to the reference to his own genitals and nobody made any motion of objection, so he continued, "and now - at this point in the story- with cold Mexican beer running down my chin and chest..."

"So, what happened?" MO interrupted.

"That *is* what happened. I don't remember a thing after that. And this shit happened every week; it was some new bizarre girl -a girl with a kid, a girl with fake tits, who wanted to fuck us while doing carnival tricks and music video shit, uh, a girl with a fake name and fake *Iraqi* identity who was really Mexican, who, whom, I refused to even touch she was so mangled in her soul. That girl ended up calling me *Uday*

*Hussain* for kicking her out when I discovered her lies,” he said as Isaiah asked a question about the Iraqi-Mexican girl.

“How did you know she was lying?” he asked.

“Oh, I asked her about the University of Baghdad and she claimed there was no university in Baghdad, that’s how I knew. And look, she was Iraqi, right? Her story was she was Iraqi, but she had an ersatz British accent on top, this is how clever this bitch was. She affected a British accent, to show us she was educated in the west, but as she got drunk -I took them all out for sushi and she drank a bottle of pearl *sake* - and anyway as she got drunk she pretended to let the real Iraqi, you know the Semitic accent come out, as if that’s what happened when she got drunk. It was quite clever, I must say. She was creative,” the inmate smiled as he nodded.

“Ok, go on,” MO said.

“Ok, and then when Sarah drove her home, this is, well, look, Sarah agrees to drive her home and on the way home they pull over on I25 and 58<sup>th</sup> and begin fighting; like slugging it out over this shit. This fake Iraqi who was apparently -to hear Sarah tell it- she was calling me the son of Saddam Hussain and so Sarah is beating on her for this, and the cops show up because it’s 0300 hours and a lime green car the shape and size of a beer can is pulled over on the road with two girls performing the Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling off-off-off Broadway in it, right? And when they untangle these two there’s cocaine, mushrooms, weed - which the weed was legal- but anyway, and so they arrest Sarah for assault and possession of a schedule one narcotic -two counts.

“Sarah hires my lawyer, Tom Henry and Tom -bless his heart- is like, well, after he gets the discovery evidence against her pulls me aside and says, Lyndon, this girl is insane. Drop her, ok?

“Sarah is pissed and blows her lid because Tom tells me she is working as a prostitute at some hand-job factory down town, pulling guys off for seventy-five bucks a pop. And, how he knows this, is that she *tells* Tom this is her job when he asks. She tells him this. And she expected him not to tell me, you know client-attorney privilege and all that. Well, in the real world, I’m Tom’s client, ok? I paid him like \$50,000 to get me off those weapons’ charges the year prior and he is loyal to me.

“And in fact, I’m paying her bill too, so yeah, he tells me that my -one of my- so-called girlfriends is a whore, and not a normal slut like all females born after 1960 are, I mean a paid prostitute and I’m just like, *nigga please*.

“I’m at the end of my rope. My life is a chaos machine. I’m exceeding the weight limits of the bed frame I have no doubt, the slats of the bed are breaking and my dick is so sore it hurts to pull it out to piss, and I have zero seminal fluid left in me, not anywhere in the darkest recesses of my soul, ok?

“A wooden dowel with a flag that unrolls as it ejects from my urethra -you know- a fuckin’ flag with the word *BANG* comes out when I cum, ok?” he says as Isaiah smirks and Lyndon shakes his head at his own story. MO needed .033 seconds -.13 more than normal- to determine if that urethra thing was hyperbole or meant to be taken literally.

“And I am working twelve hours each day; doing real work, like horticultural work, back breaking shit, lifting heavy shit over and over; plus I am handling HVAC issues and CO<sup>2</sup> issues and root-aphids and mites and buyers from out of town showing up in the middle of the night to pick up fifty-pounds of bricked dope. Paying in cash, cash, *ok* ? Which means I’m driving around with a hundred-large in cash. And, and I’ve got partners who are bitching about a measly hundred bucks in a million dollar operation -I mean real

nickel and dime shit- and I'm dealing with incessant power outages and exploding transformers from the amp draw that we are taxing the systems with, and fuckin' cops coming by because we have HVAC guys on the roof at midnight and it looks suspicious as hell.

"I'm getting in fist fights with *cholos* , you know, Mexican gangsters on second avenue and the cops are arresting me for it; because these so-called badasses are calling the cops like total fucking fags. And I'm ramming cars in traffic because I have had it. I'm pulling guns on people when they put their filthy Mexican hands on me and I'm losing my mind over every infraction and my walls look like *whack-a-mole* boards 'cause I've punched them so often.

"And my knuckles are like permanently bloody and all my money is going to buying new cars that I have to fly to Utah or Kentucky or Texas to drive back," the inmate took a moment to breathe.

"Have to?" MO asks. He was wondering why he *had* to buy these cars.

"Well, the cars I'm buying for fun because I have the loot, but I mean I'm buying them online so I have to fly ought to go get them, which is stressful and time consuming because I cannot allow the grow to go too long without my tender *lovin'* care, savvy?"

"Savvy," Isaiah said.

"I'm stopping at wineries in Arizona -that Caduceus place in Jerome- or stopping in California and buying cases of cult cabs from Hall or *Coup de Foudre* , or Plumpjack, or weird shit that Robert Parker has just mentioned in his little magazine he puts out a few times a year."

"Wine Advocate," Isaiah says as Lyndon nods.

"I'm hemorrhaging cash, like \$20,000 a month on cars and booze and wine and dinner and shoes for the girls, and gold

bullion and Apple stock which was at \$95.60 I think when I got a hundred shares. I'm just buying anything and everything.

"Land, I bought 35 acres of high altitude forested land in the *San Isabel* forest. I'm taking the girls out to restaurants, like Batman with one on each arm and," the inmate stopped as MO interrupted.

"You mean Bruce Wayne?" MO asked.

"Yeah, Batman," the inmate said, not yet getting his point.

"Well, Bruce Wayne not Batman, if you're at restaurants," MO said as Isaiah was laughing quietly in the background.

"Right," the inmate laughed, "right, Bruce Wayne, not Batman, Batman did not bring two blondes into restaurants you are correct." Lyndon was laughing even harder now and looking at Isaiah who just tilted his head and smiled.

"Anyway, people are staring, and I see people I know and they are shaking their heads like *who the fuck is this guy?* I am loaded on Vicodin and wine each day by noon. I'm strapped with a forty-five at all times and just looking for a fight. And everyone is plotting against me, everyone. There is a real war going on, a cold war, and everyone is tense. I mean it ain't paranoia, they really are out to get me, they hate my hubris and that I live like this and they hate me like I'm Tom fucking Brady, 'cause in Denver, a dipshit like me passes for that shit.

"I am the most hated man in the world. The cops are furious with me, they've been at the house a half dozen times for all manner of shit, the girls have had it with my anger, my customers think I am a dick -because I brow beat them for who knows why; because they are two or three standard deviations from me in IQ, whatever- and my business partners are ready to stage a *coup* because I threaten to punch them anytime they complain, and I am sending

letters to Salman Rushdie and Anita Thompson -Hunter's widow- telling them how retarded and evil they are.

"Nobody is on board with any of this. And Sarah in a total breakdown, mad as fuck at me, sends me a text: *great cock, horrid personality* . And that is it. She and Alina and Michelle -oh I forgot about Michelle, man that girl was perfect and I ran her off too, I regret that one; anyway, and all these girls are rebelling -and look, I never cheated on any one, all my amorous relationships were above board, I was not sneaking around- but my partners are locking me out of the grows, the cops are threatening me *via* my lawyer and then -fucking then- my own father sells me out," the inmate tilted and dropped his head to connote he was even tired of telling people this shit.

"Oh, is this the Carey thing?" MO asked as he watched the *amygdala* function and cortisol levels rise. He timestamped it. Isaiah and he had already discussed all this, but it was useful to hear it from the inmate himself.

"Yeah, and so I just start drawing all these really cool portraits of the great authors of the west and never leaving the house and refusing to do anything; my stress is through the roof and I'm just reading and drawing these portraits; Hercules, the twelve Labors and one of Castro with books and M1s flying all around him in a maelstrom of revolutionary praxis, you know books and guns.

"And I have a personal assistant named Kat and she hired massage therapists to come to the house and this one, Andrea is a ballet dancer, built like an athlete, and like twenty-two years-old and so me and her start fucking. And Sarah, after her Spidy-sense can tell I've moved on, comes back to me and asks to be allowed back into the harem and now these are my two girls and they fuck each other like weirdos and take showers in my huge shower -a shower I built by-the-way- and one morning while I'm trying to shave,

the steam is clouding the mirrors and I'm getting annoyed and I turn around and there are two twenty-something angels, perfect specimens -Andrea is a ballet dancer, ok, I mean she is hard as a rock and tiny, like A-cup tits which I adore- ok, fuck big tits, I hate big tits, but despite this epic *mise-en-scène*, I'm angry. Just so I can finally get to the goddamn point, my point is I'm angry. I ain't happy at all.

"Who is angry in this situation?" the inmate asks as they just measure his affect and make eye contact with him.

"What 40-year-old man is angry when he turns around as sees two twenty-year-old girl -ok?- beautiful, sexy, athletic broads who adore him, want to fuck him all day, and his response is anger because the mirror is covered with steam?

"I had it all. I had money and cars and clothes and females and a creative life, total control. I had no boss, not one person over me, and I was furious, enraged, and insane. You tell me why. Go on," the inmate asked.

"Because it was a lie?" Isaiah said; not asking.

"Bingo. I had the American Dream. I had it. And it sucked. Everyone around me was a liar and fake and stupid. I had what they advertise. I had the thing every guy wants but doesn't have the brains or looks or balls or money or creativity or style to get.

"And so they, the average dork, he can chase it, like the carrot on the stick over the mule's head, the dogs chasing the rabbit at the dog track on the little machine that they will never reach. They can be content because they will always chase and never catch," the inmate said and eyed the level of the fluid in his glass.

"Right," MO said, "the dopaminergic system mediated in the *thalamic* region gives a man meaning -purpose- when he *chases* the goal, making incremental progress but never

catches it, never collapses the framework of mere consummatory reward.”

The inmate nodded, he figured that was right. All he knew was that he was like the dog who'd caught the goddamn car.

“He -the man of averages- he is always in *search* and thus always activating that sense of meaning,” Isaiah added.

“But, the man who *catches* the car is *kinda* fucked, right?” the inmate asked. “Ever notice that real artists when they get rich and make it, kill themselves often enough? They see it too.

“I caught the rabbit, the mechanical rabbit. I was the dog that caught the car. And I found it unsatisfying. What I really wanted was to move to the forest, hunt bear and elk and read all day and talk to no one and put up with nothing and flee to the wilderness to become a beast myself, to reinsert myself into the womb of the world, to be natural man. To get away from the incessant lying and phony posing by everyone.

“That was my American Dream, and so after getting all my shit taken, stolen, everyone turning on me -including my fucking family- I took my cash and the land I had bought, and built a refuge, a natural preserve for the *last of the grizzlies in settled Missouri* and I led a good and meaningful life.

“That was the best year of my life. I was blown away by my joy, my deep meaning, even with all the heartache and tears and sadness -of which there was plenty- I mean I was suffering from PTSD, all that malice, all that betrayal, it killed me, but I was still doing great. I was healing and living an authentic life and man, it was a true re-birth of a man. Of an ancient man,” the inmate said as he looked down and to the left a bit and thought of his former home.



“What a happened?” MO asked as he watched the *limbic system* and *cerebellum* fire as the *dmPFC* warmed up.

“Nothing. I had business to settle with my enemies, and I settled it. I was moving forward toward my dream, my vision. I do not see this as some derailment of my dreams, this was the fulfillment of them. I am right on track. Vanquishing your enemies and hearing *the lamentations of their womenfolk* is a marker of the good life. Like a fat bank account or six kids or a full head of hair. It’s a marker of success. All mankind knew this until about a hundred years ago.

“But people are so historically illiterate now, so totally devoid of any knowledge that didn’t come from the last fifteen minutes, that they have no idea what their ancestors valued. Well, I know. Modern men think I fucked up; that I should have just let it go. But they are pussies and cowards. They think freedom is more important than honor.

“I’ve read the Bible, *First Kings* and *Deuteronomy* and *Revelation* . I’ve read the Greeks, *Lucretius* and *Draco* , and the stoics and Spartans especially. I’ve read *Herodotus* and his accounts of *Xerxes* . I’ve read what the *Chinese* and *Mishima* think. I’ve read the *Māoris* and the *Comanche* and the *Norsemen* , man. Look, ninety-nine percent of mankind from ten-thousand years ago to nineteen-hundred of the common era, were very aware of what the good life was: to destroy your enemies and take no shit.

“It’s hard for squares and normal people -people with no souls- to see how being incarcerated for forty-six homicides is a good thing. But, I feel like I’m like MLK from Birmingham jail, man. But squares have no vision. They think eating shit all day is *a-ok* , that having a domineering wife is *no-problemo* , they think that being a slave to the machine is just-the-way-life is, man.

“They saw nothing wrong with my Rockstar life, they didn’t see the pain and *ennui* and stupidity of that. They would have sold their soul to the devil to have my life. And I threw it all away. So, it is they -not me- who are calibrated all wrong. They want what I rejected, and I want what they fear and hate and cannot comprehend. I wanted it and I had it. Poggio Bracciolini said, *let us spend our leisure with books, which teach us to despise what many people desire,* ” the inmate said and breathed through his nose as it flared under his gaze into some indistinct place ahead and abaft of Isaiah and MO.

“I was born a great man in a low-brow and soulless culture. I am John Brown at Harper’s Ferry, Socrates before the senate, I’m Malcolm X denouncing the Honorable Elijah Mohammed and the US government too. I’m *that* guy.

“ I think those are good lives, those men -those killed and jailed for insurrection and vengeance and righteousness in times of universal deceit- *they* are Great men. Not these average dipshits that live to 74.5 years of age with their 401k’s and their two point two kids who are on Ritalin and have no souls. Modern men, *those* guys who eat shit all day from everyone like slaves and have the nerve to call their life *good* ? *Nigga* please.

“I know what the good life is, and it ain’t money and chicks and fancy cars and clothes. It ain’t. And I had that life, I had it. So, it ain’t *sour grapes* with me.

“I just discovered that the genuinely Good life is living the Honorable life, where your enemies suffer for their crimes against you and the system must contend with the moral force of your arguments. I feel that each man must do his part to ensure the equilibrated system is brought forth. The guilty must pay; that means my enemies and then me as well. I place myself next to history’s Great men, all betrayed, maligned, murdered. I stand with Caesar and

*Toussaint L'Oeverture* , and all the artists who never were recognized in their time, from Simone Weil to Nietzsche to Blake and The Author himself.

“Nobody good is lauded in their own time. So, I obviously welcome the opprobrium of my peers and my epoch; it confirms what I already know to be true,” he said.

“What?” MO prompted as the DTI and fMRI data streamed in at 1.3 times the normal rate; MO had improved the imaging technique the previous day.

“Look, hardly anyone stops to consider what defines a good life; they just accept the bullshit that TV tells them is true. They think money and some job and peace and quiet is the good life. As Chen says, he *just wants to enjoy his cornflakes* . But I see that as a tragedy. I mean that. I see most men’s lives as a tragedy. They think mine is; and I think theirs is.

“I see nothing tragic in my life; nothing. I lived as I saw fit. I did things most men only dream of and wistfully pine for with no chance of doing them. I did them. I did things that made me feel alive, noble, honest; and I did them for years. And Hunter Thompson once said that he would have felt trapped by life if he didn’t know he could commit suicide anytime he wanted.

“And he did. He did it. Was his life tragic? No way. That dude had a grand life. His whole life was art. He rode that BSA Lightning right over the edge. And he had a facility with words that proved he thought in grand terms, and most people do not even understand that the man who can speak and write with that kind of facility is a man who can *think* in such artful strokes, too. And brother, language proves a man’s inner life. It’s proof he is internally large.

“That means a man who can write so precisely and from the heart must have a huge inner life, a life defined or seen in massive Eurasian landscapes and variegated *menagerie*

that makes *homme moyen's* inner life look like a ten by ten white walled room with a fake rubber plant in the corner.

"See, nobody talks about this, because they can't even image how poor -how impoverished- their inner lives are. But I've spoken to men and there is nothing inside them. They are already dead and already imprisoned. They have no inner lives. They feel nothing, they are nothing," inmate 16180339 said. But, once he said it he knew it was unfair. Travis had tried, he really had. He had something of their heritage, their genome in him, he had it. But it was so repressed, so deformed, he never showed anyone. He had showed his little brother though, once, and the inmate now thought of that time and felt unclean for not giving his brother more credit, giving him a solid defense.

"Look, the artist proves what he is by the complexity of his words and his life. Look at the world-building of great artists, look at what they construct out of mere words or oil-paint or some animal guts, some Ernie Balls stretched across some lumber, or skins taut over the head of a drum. Look at what men create with just their minds and then add what they've made of their lives. Add it up.

"Look at how great men lived. Look at the excitement, the honesty, the *frisson* of their heroism, their antagonism to things that outraged them; to things ugly and obscene. Look how honest they are. The average man slinks away to his room and bitterly complains, the hero goes out into the world and fights back, physically -with his body- against tyranny and stupidity and ugliness. He puts forth beauty into the world, and he offers up his body for this project. He adds intelligent speech to the conversation. He breaks his body and soul on the wheel of grand vocation, on epic locations, whaling or firefighting or battling the barbarians with swords and M4s, riding *into* the storms, not away from them.

"I refuse to allow the average man to define my life, when he has neither the language to describe what he sees, nor the inner landscape with which to place his artless descriptions of me. No, he can jail me, kill me -and shake his head- but he cannot speak ill of me and my life with any authority or righteousness. No more than I can condemn *Alexander the Great* or *Temujin* or *Charlemagne* or *Hannibal* or *Caesar* or *Thomas Jefferson* .

"I have no moral right to condemn those men, all of them murders by the way. All of them killed and killed and killed some more; and killed justly and sometimes barbarically, and sometimes unjustly. But always with balls. And they created it -not merely lived in it- but *created* -built- hewed it from the rock of their world.

"I'm nothing compared to them and, thusly, my enemies and the man-on-the-street ought to look at their little lives and admit that they have not done even one-percent of what I've accomplished in art, love, courage, work, labor, poetry and facility with language and standing -physically standing- by that word in a hundred-and-one ways, not the least of which is making good on my threats to extirpate my enemies. Who among these regular *fellas* , who among the modern man has done that? They are *all* talk and artless talk at that. Jesus, they are not even good at the only thing they do: *talk* .

"They are bumbling unlettered fools, have you heard Sean Hannity speak or John Heilman? They are barely literate. These are men who cannot put five words together without a disaster of linguistic malice and a tawdry blaspheme of syntax and word choice errors; and eighty-percent of what they say is *cliché* .

"They steal the words and boilerplate phrasing and insipid analogies and maudlin metaphor of other men and do it with aplomb; zero shame. Listen to them, really listen to

them. It is so painful as to be unbearable, as they have nothing original or beautiful or complex or interesting or brave to say. They gossip or subtweet, never say it to a man's face. They say what is expected of them, like the good little slaves that they are. Their lives are sad, by any metric besides money, they are sad little men. And yet they think they can condemn me, me, a *real* man?

"That is like the skinny punk at the zoo taunting the Siberian tiger behind the bars. It's pathetic and sad and nobody who witnesses such a thing ought to be able to stomach a low and weak piece of shit human, pretending in front of God and Nature that he is somehow above the apex predator he mocks merely because *bars* separate them. I would bow before a tiger and admit I am nothing compared to its five-hundred-pounds of perfect -predatory- poetry.

"I am a Life-Artist. I'm a man who made his *life* his art project, tending to each and every thing; a man awake, paying attention, with deference to his ancestors, and the received wisdom of God and Great men alike.

"I'm a great man destined to be seen as great in a hundred years; long after I've left the stage. But, man, in the interim I lived a raucous and interesting life, not some boring, tepid, do-as-your-told life like most of all mankind. I was large, and had a capacious heart, and tread on this earth with an internal landscape sloshing around in me so voluminous and long and wide that you can see the curvature of the earth as you scan it. And that world was and is populated by subtle thought, physical and moral courage, deep and abiding love, pure and unalloyed hate, aching beauty, apex magnanimity, and every once in a while, even a sense of humor.

"All as the shadow of life's murderous constant," he paused to repeat, "constant, is moving like a sun dial under the

*terroir* of that high sky and that deep earth, " he said and gave MO a wink.

MO watched the inmate's brain imaging come in off the DTI and fMRI and infuse the cloud and his own interface; the redolent and finely detailed bodies and breaths and paw and winged sounds of thousands of predatory cats, and bear and wolves and carrion-eating birds flew and galloped and ran along an internal tundra of snow and rock and hemmed in by a burning forest of Aspens and Pinon and Juniper Pine. He saw thousands of beetle-bark infested and healthy and nested-up-high snow laden and wet evergreens. The screen showed eagles watching as they were untrammelled by the high striving flames; blazes of diesel and jet fuel and lightning strikes and St. Elmo's Fires burning two vivisected continents on each flanking side.

The inmate thought of this march of predators in images - not words- but he found himself musing on the *Aeneid* and that epigraph that blessed those that *can find out the true cause of things* , an allusion to *Lucretius' De Rerum Natura* .

The next fragment, and its ironic jab at *Lucretius* dismissed by most men ran in his head as it printed itself on the screen:

*...and has trampled underfoot all fears and inexorable fate and the roar of greedy Acheron .*

Those words hung like bunting in an empty hall, a large but ignored sign in the head of this man. Isaiah wondered how much of such men will be buried under the *Vesuvius* expanse that immolated all in the *Herculaneum* on the bay of Naples? He thought of the first few charcoal briquettes burned by the workers for warmth, later discovering that these coals were actually manuscripts, half ruined -half preserved- by the fire and black soot?

The man's mind ran each beast in a stream as the *Virtutes Vocis* played in his head. MO decided to add it to the blue-tooth audio of the room so that it may play in here too, as the *nanobots* turned the screen from the imaging data to a recapitulation of his inner world. Isaiah and MO watched as the ten-foot by six-foot screen played the images that the inmate saw -witnessed, created and re-lived in his mind- as the ethereal voices and perfect string work of the musician flooded the room and each man's insides as if they might themselves be bodies in motion around all noble orbs.

*Grab his horns with your left hand and cut his throat with your right,* he heard *Miriam* say as he tracked the neural path of left hemisphere and right.

Isaiah just said, "*eppur si muove* ," as the image of *Bartolome Murillo* lived in his own head for a flash as the carving of those words on the cell wall were barely legible - in relief and recreated- for him to ponder. There was more tragedy in the inmate's life than Isaiah felt like he could think on; but the tragedy -the inmate was correct on this point- was not where his enemies would locate it.

The tragedy was far away from jail and death. Rather, the tragedy was in the fact that great things cannot replicate and are doomed to be unique; and that the world itself is doomed to this fate.



## 43.2 Kali Yuga

Those few who gained a share of understanding

Who foolishly unlocked their hearts  
Their pent-up feelings, and their visions to the rabble  
Have always ended on the cross and pyre.  
Forgive me friend, the night is well advanced  
We must suspend our conversation –  
Faust [Goethe, Wolfgang Johann]

The millions that I would fear are those who do not dream in the prizes that the nation holds forth, for it is in them that a revolution has taken place and is biding its time to translate itself into a new and strange way of life  
Black Boy [Wright, Richard]

Your good genius will count up your good deeds with white pebbles, the evil genius the evil deeds with black pebbles  
*Bardo Thodol* [Padmasambhava]

## **I. 2040 e.v.**

The motors spun and built a gaseous barrier around the missile.

The R-39 wet its beak at a depth of 174 feet in the Caspian, and the *Ta ифyh* -class submarine imported water to its ballasts to stabilize. By the time the warhead breached the surface the Captain had ordered them to accelerate to 22knots and dive a hundred meters down. The crew was down to 155 sailors from 160; five men had died of the virus and their bodies had been laid to rest at sea per their instructions from Bad Mountain.

The MIRVs -which under the conical cap looked like black incense cones arrayed in dial like a ten hour clock- unlocked at 500 meters above sea-level and the Captain's coder was pinged.

"Èto *daleko* ," he said to his First Mate and the sailor marked the next launch spot to the steersman on a small whiteboard and co-ordinates were written back and forth.

The Captain offered a drink to the radar man as they watch the first SLBM move on the antiquated radar screen.

The missile was dry at 900-meters above sea level; the nuclear warheads armed in succession, 10-3-7-2-8-5-4-1-6-9.

The Captain gave the communicator a verbal code, in English:

*Its pragmatic maxims, suitable for puppets* , as Goethe says

The communicator allowed the Quantum Key Distribution code to load onto the qubits -which were in superpositions between zero and one or upon a zero itself. The QKD program that the Russians had stolen from the Chinese -who had stolen it from the Ohio-class submarine program of the Americans *via* an aide in Mike DeWine's office- sent the signal *via* laser to a satellite in orbit over the Eurasian steppe.

The coded message would remain in superposition until opened on the other end.

It could be sent with the submarine below a hundred meters, travelling at speeds of 22 knots, and it could not be forged nor detected once read. It was a onetime message. It was retrofitted onto the older -Typhoon-class- Russian submarine for reasons even the Captain was not told. He deleted the audio file from his hand-held recorder and thanked the sailor quietly.

He moved back to the center of the helm.

The Captain of the TK-208 -which still had a stress scar from an accident in 1992 and was originally built in the *Sevmash* shipyard that his uncle had been a builder at for 44 years- took another drink from the Vodka his uncles had gave him before they deployed back in the spring. He then asked the First Mate to pass the flask around now that the first nuke

was away and the communication had been sent. It would be twelve minutes before their next launch site and he wanted his own flask emptied at once. He worried they'd be attacked as the SLBM signature would give their position away to the Americans.

"*Da* ," the mate said as he took the silver flask to each man and watched as they took a drink. His thumb touched the embossed family escutcheon, but his eyes remained on each sailor.

Captain Volkov closed his eyes and thought of the Urals. In his mind he stood straight -before the leg had lost its inch and gained a zipper scar behind the knee- and he watched a herd of elk pass through at the end of the bifurcated line -on either side- of trees. He felt the breeze cool coming off *Lake Zjuratkul* . His eyes and *visual cortex* counted twenty-one elk, a tally his heart did not care to enumerate; *did one count the petals of the bulb and miss the singular bloom ?* he asked now in reverie as the sub's lights were dim and the backs of the heads of his crew were all that he saw.

He had remained quiet as the animals had passed, they looked just once his way as the tree boughs were avoided, the scrub oak sniffed and chewed briefly on their sojourn.

His people had not grown impatient; each moment was the only one. Their PGC's that the government had implanted in them back in 2024 had begun to run their protocols; he'd recalled that all their eyes went black and the perimeter was set by the drones as they flew along the concrete wall of their land. For weeks the Russian government had trained them in their own habitat. They had been told to hunt and fish as normal; but to limit interaction with other tribes of the Urals.

*They had all slept in that pose of the dead* , he remembered; and he'd recalled that their right hemispheres began to turn poetry to prose. The stories of their youth

were turned into code for the soldiers who came to their village. They were treated with respect, he recalled. And that was why he'd enlisted in the Navy when he turned twenty-one; fifteen years ago. He was the youngest Captain of the refurbished typhoon-class subs. His grandmother had warned him of the Russians. He had warned her to let the cousins do laundry by the river instead of doing everything herself.

He saw the elk of his people's -the *Tyumen* - forest as they passed and they each breathed in time, in harmony, and the green things did grow high until the grazing. He'd been taught to follow their feeding; he'd been taught everything except how to deal with the Russian command. He felt chagrin as he thought of all the mistakes he'd made on his way on the trail to commander of this old Soviet sub. But he felt he had an *î nger p ă zitor* who had given him this one last shot. He smelled the flowers of spring even in winter. He remembered the girls of his village; and the way they had gotten sick two years ago.

His uncles had stood behind him with their horns and their bows.

His coder opened with a warm feeling in the brain, and he steeled himself for a message he knew was coming through the 140 meters of sea water between him and the surface of the Caspian, and just west of *Garabogazköl* , the *mighty straight lake* of his youth. He thought of his uncles telling him that the Greeks and Persians called it the *Hyrceanian Ocean* . His grandmother still called it *Mazandaran* , as she held fast to her Persian roots. She had green eyes and blonde hair and had looked down on him and his cousins when they were born black headed with dark eyes.

The coder heated up again in a pulse. And his memories faded away.

*Yamantau* mountain of the *Beloretsky* district of the Urals had received the message from the sub, deciphered the code, and sent new orders to all 308 submarines that surrounded the United States and just outside the nine-dotted line of the Chinese.

Captain Volkov heard the three tones that preceded all messages from the old *Bashkir* name for the *bad-mountain* facility; next came a pre-recorded overture of the voice of the President:

*Our nuclear bombers pilots have been grounded too long. They are happy to start a new life...*

## **II. 2040 e.v.**

Travis arrived at ADX and the guards told him that the inmate was not able to meet him in the booth.

Travis asked why but the guards declined to even speak; they looked passed him to the next man in line. He was furious but knew his anger would achieve nothing with these functionaries; these institutional men.

He turned to his right flank and approached the doors as the guard called him back. He stopped and turned and approached just the side of the Plexiglas as a paper note was slid from another guard to the aperture of the window. Travis took it quickly in finger and shuttled it to his palm and made haste toward the door.

He sat in his truck and the snow fell quietly, all the birds were hidden away and no traffic came. He thought of the way travel was restricted from Texas now; and how the men of ADX -the men of the lab he'd met- had made sure he could bypass the checkpoints and get through this time.

He thought of the death notice in his pocket and the then of the funerals of everyone on his side of the family except the

old man himself. He smirked as he thought of why, how the old man who didn't even take care of himself outlasted everyone as the virus chewed its way through south Texas. He upbraided himself for saying that, for only caring about Texas; but he had to be honest, he didn't care that people were dying all along the coasts.

He got a shiver up his spine as the wet of his jacket's collar touched his neck. The drops on the windshield were white then melted to grey clear.

The note was crushed in his palm as he thought of all that had come and gone. It was his 71<sup>st</sup> birthday and he had driven for two days straight through from San Antonio after he'd received a message *via* email from Isaiah. He did not look at this note yet, he saw it was hand written, in black pen, and said something about *love* and *one of the most exquisite things*. He saw a name written large, it looked like *Simon* or *Simone*, he then thought, as he stared back at the Colorado mountains behind the fog and snow flurries.

He figured the paper note -the *kite*, in prison *argot* - was necessary for some reason. *Every reason was beyond his ken, his paygrade*, he thought with some muted vex. He didn't like all this mystery, *all this stupid shit*. But, he had agreed twenty years ago, and a deal was a deal. He'd not be accused of breaking deals by anyone -especially his brother- and so he followed through. He felt sleepy and laid his head back on his seat and began to think and then to dream, and then something else.

His brain began to think of that meeting in the lab. *Such a strange place that was both memory and invention*, he thought, as the brain began to release small amounts of DMT from the *pineal* gland. Each lobe shut down in sequences over the 93 seconds it took to recall -decades ago- when Isaiah and MO had explained what they needed from him, *for the inmate*, they had called him. They had

called him that before Travis demanded they call him -call his brother- by his name.

“Lyndon,” Travis recalled Isaiah saying and even nodding in assent to this correction, “is unable to uptake our technology without your help.”

“Why does he need technology?” Travis asked with suspicion. He was furious with the State and all its adjuncts for incarcerating his brother, refusing to issue him pain relief, refusing to treat him as a man. He was outraged by the way this man born perfectly for 0 A.D was treated not just as anomaly -which he was- but as unclean, as unkind, as unjust, *when he was just born too late, or maybe too soon*, he’d often add when others asked about his baby-brother.

“Well, it will provide him with a new life, a grand life, free from all this,” MO had said as he moved his eyes and head about the room to denote everything -in fact- outside the lab.

“Is this what *he* wants?” Travis asked with set jaw and fists balled. He felt ready to punch his way out of this room if these two men -he thought them men back then- said one wrong word.

“It will be, yes,” Isaiah said. He could read Travis’ central nervous and endocrine system and could read his vex. He issued the appropriate *bio-chems* to front-load his *enteric* system then the *limbic* and assuage his *cerebellum* with endorphins and a slight muscle relaxant in addition to the bonding *chems* . Isaiah liked that Travis was sticking up for Lyndon.

“Can I ask you for a favor?” Isaiah then asked, knowing that to ask a small favor was -counter intuitively- a way to earn trust, and ingratiate a man to a man.



“Ok,” Travis said with some distrust. He saw the one man -the man who looked very clean and unaged, without wrinkle or pimple or hair- pick up a black deck of cards from the grey slab that held flowers and glasses and -he now saw- a grey box with a glass shield.

“I cannot tell anyone but MO here, and you, what it is that I desire. So, I am trusting you to keep a secret that if you tell, if you reveal, if you even hint at, will ruin me, my plans -and I submit- will ruin your brother and his plans. I cannot prove this to you, I can only assert it and hope that you trust me as I am about to trust you,” Isaiah said and turned his palms up and open, his elbows at just 4-degrees below a perfect 90-degrees.

“Ok,” Travis said with a jaw that barely moved.

“Your brother is able to do many things,” Isaiah said, and Travis felt a, *but*, coming and so he intervened at once to stand up for his little brother.

“He’s a fucking genius, and he can -and he has- done things nobody has done. I’ve seen him build a home from scratch, he’s built *himself* from nothing; I’ve never seen anyone build more from less.”

“I agree,” Isaiah said, although he knew this was not exactly -technically- true, but it was true enough. “And because I -and MO too- admire him so much, we want to help him. But, his personality, his neuro-anatomical structures that undergird his personality are so far apart, so extreme that we cannot get him to rest upon a state, a position long enough for our equipment to extract its information.

“As advanced as we are, we are still limited -and likely will be for many years- limited in what we can do. We cannot bridge the gap between his extremes to

instantiate his essence.” Isaiah said with a mouth now twisting into a grimace.

“Well, what are you trying to do?” Travis asked hotly.

“We want to upload him onto a steady-state platform, we want to preserve him in amber, so-to-speak,” MO said as Isaiah nodded.

“What?” Travis asked. He recalled how the lab had looked; the strange grey of the concrete combined with the green of the walls of plants. The way the walls moved with bugs and birds came back to him in this reminiscence.

“We have platforms that can handle the compressed data of the *gestalt* human being now. We have the room on a platform just ten nanometers wide. But, his brain architecture is such that -and this is so unique that it is present in only .001% of the population- his brain is such that he oscillates between radical extremes of each of the five personality traits in real time like a photon under an electronic microscope.

“You are familiar with quantum physics, yes,” Isaiah then asked as Travis nodded.

“I mean, the basics,” Travis then added.

“Under observation a photon can be wave or particle, it exists in a state of super-position at all times. Potential. As potential. And only once observed does it collapse into one or the other,” Isaiah said.

“Ok,” Travis said.

“Well, in most men, they have a point, on a continuum along a long arc for each of the five traits. They are somewhere on the line of trait openness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, intro or extroversion, agreeableness or disagreeableness,” Isaiah explained.

"Ok," Travis said.

"Well, your brother fails to occupy one point along the continuum on any of the five traits," MO said.

"What, is that like bi-polar?" Travis asked.

"No, it's nothing like that. Bi-polar is a swing between mania and depression, it is contained in one attribute: affect. Your brother is almost always in a state of positive affect, he enjoys almost everything, even," Isaiah began as he was interrupted.

"Especially," MO broke in as he knew .004 seconds before Isaiah said each word what he was going to say.

"Conflict," Isaiah said.

"Ok," Travis said again.

"Well, he is rarely depressed. So, no, he is not bipolar. What he is, well, he is both extremes of each five traits. He is an extreme introvert and extrovert; he hides for months and sees no one then will talk with abandon with a man for days as if they are best friends. He is an extremely disagreeable person, arguing over the smallest infraction or point of detail and then so agreeable a man that he would give up half his million-dollar company to a woman just on a whim.

"He is extremely conscientious working twelve hours days, three-hundred-sixty days a year and will then -out of the blue- refuse -over the smallest personal pique- refuse to lift a finger in labor.

"And, he is so open -so high in trait openness- he will tell a stranger his most closely guarded secrets, and then refuse to even disclose -even use- his real name with someone for no reason at all.

"And he so insouciant to not fear death at all over the most minuscule point of honor, and then become so

neurotic as to worry over one word in one sentence he used in an hour long speech; afraid it may have offended someone or conveyed the wrong impression of him," Isaiah explained.

"Yeah, he's odd," Travis said. "Nobody in our family understands him. But I do."

"But he is odd in an odd way," MO added as he shuffled the cards haphazardly.

"Ok," Travis said with some annoyance that they hadn't heard him say he understood his brother better than they thought. He too wanted to be a goat herder in the Highlands, he too wanted the simple life, he too felt like crushing skulls. He didn't act on it, but he felt like it just like his brother did. He wanted to tell them all that. He too liked the mist and cold.

He flexed even his toes in his boots. His eyes narrowed.

Travis thought of the day they had last spoken before all these legal travails, when Lyndon had explained the way a genome -their genome- could contain fealty for goats, and fog and the way their ancestors lived 12,000 years ago. He had said their people were last in pure form in the 14<sup>th</sup> century of the common era, Travis recalled and he remembered thinking the way Lyndon said, *common era* , made him seem strange and aloof.

Travis thought of the two rivers -one roiling above with class-V crests, one cavitating below- and he ruminated on how they began at the Ben Nevis together and ended in the one-sea that issued forth from the Isle of Skye. He traced in his mind the creeks as they left the Ionia lee, then lapped the Icelandic shores and eroded Norman coasts and evaporated to occlude the Caledonian greens.

“Technically odd. Like, odd in a way that is not normal; even at the tails of the normal distribution. He is beyond odd, he has two people in him, and they are opposites. Not just two people, but God and Satan both,” Isaiah said as MO nodded.

“Yeah, he can be, well, he has a short fuse,” Travis said. He felt bad for truncating all he thought of his brother into such sentences. He felt ten-to-one what he had just said.

“No, that is not what we mean. He is two distinct people in one. And two opposites. His two people are as far apart as any two can be, along each of the five traits. There is no corollary among the genomes that we have investigated,” Isaiah said.

“And we have ninety-four-percent of the earth’s genome on file now,” MO added.

“He is *sui generis*,” Isaiah said as he read the brother’s allostatic system again and loaded up more *bio-chems*.

“Is that why he is such a dick?” Travis asked with a grin. He masked his affinity with chiding jokes; he moved left while feeling right.

“Yes, and why he’d kill himself to save your pride if necessary. Yes, to both,” Isaiah said with his eyes locked on to the man.

“What?” Travis asked with incredulity.

“He wanted to kill Kenner, your brother-in-law, just to avenge your pride,” MO began.

“Honor. Your honor,” Isaiah clarified.

“He felt Kenner was so evil,” MO continued on, “so mendacious -and had plotted against you so thoroughly-that he wanted to kill him. And the only reason he did not was because he felt your wife would blame you. He

refrained only to save your marriage -a marriage he thinks is phony anyway, but he knows you need- and although he knew that killing Kenner would place himself in a type of danger he could not escape as easily as the murders he planned for his own enemies, that is not why he refrained. He knew he'd be exposed due to, well, due to many reasons."

MO stopped speaking and thus stopped an in-depth *rationale* -not explaining along metabolic and legal vectors- as these other reasons were too complex to describe without confusing the man they needed to use for this project. To confuse was to lower the likelihood of agreement, MO knew. So he stopped adding detail.

*Too much information can actually -64% of the time- ruin what less information will manifest or preserve*, MO thought as he produced *bio-chems* into the air to activate the older brother's left hemisphere; overriding the confusion of the right hemisphere in this, the inmate's kin.

"The point, is that he wanted to kill a man over your honor, not his own," Isaiah added as he move subtly, adjusting his stance.

"Well, Kenner is just stupid, he's not evil," Travis said. His fists had relaxed. His jaw was loose.

"That is not true, and you know it; and Lyndon knows it. Kenner sabotaged you on purpose. And you let him off the hook to avoid the *contretemps* with your wife and him and your little world. You did a cost benefit analysis and came down on the side of pretending his was just fatuous and not malicious. But deep down you know he fucked you on purpose. You know it in your balls," Isaiah said as he provoked the brother and issued oxytocin and vasopressin just under his nose.

Travis did know it, but he refused to say it aloud. He felt loyal to his brother, all at once, in a rush.

He knew that if he accused his brother-in-law -Kenner- of malice that his own marriage would suffer, as his wife was more loyal to the family as a thing *writ large* than to him -Travis- as individual. But -he thought- as long as he never pushed it, never tested her, he could maintain the fiction that she was loyal to him.

*Females saw the whole, not the individual* , he felt instinctively as he saw his brother's face in his mind.

"Anyway, we need help," MO said as he could read that Travis was now primed.

"Ok," Travis said eager to not ruminate on Kenner any further.

"We need genetic material from you to balance it out," MO said. They needed his real-time gene expression under five different brain states too. But they did not need to explain the details, they had just needed to run him through the phases. They would need him to donate genetic material in real time over many years, under many brain states, for their experiment to have any chance to work.

"But that DNA needs to be close enough to be, well, to have chiral valence. To be the same but mirrored, so-to-speak. A random person with a mollifying affect would be rejected as too dissimilar, but we've run your genome and it is almost exact, you two are so similar as to be nearly identical in all the ways we need," MO explained as he stopped shuffling the black deck.

"We are strangely similar," Travis said. "Did he ever tell you about how we had our business partners try to steal the business from us at the same time and," he began to say as he was interrupted.

“Yes, and you had a lawyer and the law on your side and he had no one,” Isaiah said as Travis felt the pang of guilt at this incongruous part of the analogy. Then he felt anger because he felt this man was taking a shot at him.

“But, you can help him now, in a way that will supersede all past failures,” MO said. An assuaging offer was thus laid. Travis’ brain swerved back and forth between all these emotions and states.

“And all we need is your genetic material and eight hours of your time here in the lab,” Isaiah added. He did not mention that each time the man came to visit that they would measure his blood and brain as the two men -the two brothers- spoke and argued and occasionally agreed.

“Eight hours, really?” Travis asked.

“Yes, and you are not due back in Texas until Monday, yes?” Isaiah asked already knowing the answer.

“Well, yeah, I guess.” Travis conceded. He had left on Thursday and arrived on Saturday, and so technically he could leave tonight at midnight and still arrive back to work on Monday.

“So, if we get started now, you can be back in Texas by 0800hrs on Monday,” Isaiah said as the route and timeline populated the screen to their right flank. Travis saw the looming screen and was impressed by its detail. He wondered if Lyndon would ever know what he was doing; if these men would tell him. He wondered if it was the right thing to do. But, he knew if he kept asking questions he might chicken out. So, he began to speak instead of think.

“Ok, what do I need to do? Do I need to fast for twelve hours or what?” he said as they smiled at him and asked him to sit in the inmate’s usual chair.



*"Hawai'i has a daily and yearly average of 80-degrees. 82.5 in summer day; 77.5 in winter night. The Mojave has the same average; but it's 120-degrees in summer day, and 40-degrees in winter night. Same average, but achieved in two very different ways,"* Isaiah said, as Travis nodded and wondered if the experiment had already begun.

The memory faded at that and Travis laid his head back in the truck.

The music played softly and Tavis slept in the parking lot as the orders from the Colorado Nation Guard went out closing the borders. The song said:

*Sinnerman run to your grave; the grave will not hold you...*

### **III. 2038 e.v.**

The sun had been hidden behind the clouds and now the moon was at their noon. The ambient light was the same as when they first fell asleep. The shadows were all that had progressed. Fog lay all about -two meters off the ground- as if suspended by Heaven's own strings.

"Nobody talks about the pernicious and dissipating effect of love; of amorous love. It's seen as the highest good, as the goal of everyman. Even the fags want marriage now. They miss the point like the rest of us," he said as they awoke from their slumber -on the path- to his speaking and moving his arms. They had slept passed him; as the elk-people passed. They often took these naps together in the day; they often sat up at night.

But he had awoke and began speaking as they blinked and looked around.

"I remember the words of *Anacreon* , twenty-five-hundred years ago: *and, what did I unthinkingly do? I took to arms, undaunted too; I fought with love, I fought with love! Vain, vain is every outward care, my foe's within, and triumphs there.*

"You think he didn't know the answer? Shit, we all know the answer, but we fail to show resolve. We have such innate and primordial need for social bonds, we make friends and lovers and hold our children up as the only thing worth saving in a flood. And of course, there are the psychopaths who don't care at all about other men. But, I'm not speaking of them. I'm speaking of those of us with engorged - tumescent- hearts, with cathexis for the approval of our kin and culture, who want to be liked and above all, loved. And to love, as well.

"We want it, but we know this social compromise is death; it is the death of anything noble or original or autonomous in us. We know it. And we fight against the corruption of love; the amelioration of social bonds; we kick against the pricks.

"Goddammit, we have hearts, we aren't cold men. But we demand the right to be alone to preserve that which is worth preserving: *autonomy* . Can just one set of men, some janissary or monkish sect, perform a duty higher than slaking lusts and assuaging loneliness? Is there not some higher call than to be the seed to some future flower; to prepare the ground for some regent's walk; to wipe away occluding clouds so a princess can ride a chariot to some moon or star and begin it all over again?" he said with sarcasm and listed his arm over the grey smolder of the coals. He pointed to where the fog met the smoke.

"Can not a man be himself, by himself, complete?" he asked as he watched some of the men wander away to relieve themselves; some men close their eyes again.

“Can a man not live in the moment and not for some future gain? Is this not possible without the inner flood and outer damnation? Must we explain ourselves? I guess we must. We seem such pathetic cases to the rest of man. Men, who like the deluded prisoner thinks the free man beyond his own bars is -in fact- himself behind those bars that trap him, that trap the prisoner. The prisoner laments the free man’s position on the wrong side of the bars. Our position is seen as wrong by almost all of man; and yet they have barely one percent the knowledge we have. Even less our wisdom.

“Take a look around; and see who has more ground upon to walk, see which one of us roams wild and free and which is tethered to his fears and lusts. How far can you, you common man,” he paused as he meant to indict the Jacks, but wouldn’t say it straight, “retreat from the prison bars you think you are on the free side of? Can you walk a free fathom -or two- before you are forced to turn around and head toward those fetters again; to re-gain your wife’s and brother-in-law’s approval like some serf? Well?

“What would you think of a man who could walk away from every chain, who had the time and space to never have to look back again?” he asked and poked at the fire’s charred logs and twigs; turning the grey and black and deep red. He had put the old coffee on the grate and let the coals reheat it from last night.

He had allowed his eyes to focus right in front, *as metaphor*, he supposed. He watched the coals not the Jacks.

He felt this obsession with the future was like all things: cure and curse at once. It cured the problem of short lives, it made man live long. It cured promiscuous violence, it allowed tempers to cool. It cured ossified societies, it allowed the culture to grow in complexity.

It was not without merit. He felt embarrassed.

He thought of the *M ā ori* , and how they had been made of the sub-atomic seeds of aggression, manliness. And how the British guns in 1815 e.v., had accelerated their wars on one another, each *iwi* against the other. *A cleansing, a Damascus annealing* , he thought and he thought of Blax; he saw the *moko* upon him in his mind. *Although they'd make him call it, Kirithui, as they would claim he was not Māori*, Jack added to his thoughts, as caveat.

Hongi Hiki, *of the Nga Puhi, killed thousands in his quest for ancient -long-held- grudges and revenge. A quarter of Māori died in the twenty years of musket conflict, and the bloodshed made Christianity grow it seemed; like the blood of Christ killed over and over again.*

*Man's blood made Christ grow* , he thought as he held the stick still.

*Warfare stopped by 1840 of the common era* , he thought. *And the warrior tribes were pacified by this meek god inside tired man; man so made after too much war* . But the MAO-a short allele remained buried like warrior's silver coins in the Icelandic *foss* . The *M ā ori* had it at twice the rate of modern man. *The M ā ori were men of buried treasure* , he thought as he thought of all that ocean between them. The time seemed less than the space.

He thought of the ants, *Argentine* to *Tetramorium caespitum* , fighting incessantly. *Hamafyas* baboons, common chimps, and *Mungi* hyenas versus *Scratching Rock* hyenas too. He thought of baby elephant teeth that grew into regal tusks; what EO Wilson called *hypertrophy*.

Man's dentine, his teeth, a society grossly emerging from innate traits of expanding tribal man. *His tusks so far out from his mouth*, he thought and felt the heat off the coals and coffee.

*Some men are content to be, and not grow; sated to live now, not in some future tense; to be in the noon-sun of true, and not shade the truth so that a greater truth may come later on .*

“Maybe,” he said aloud.

*But those men were always wiped out by the aggregating, accreting, teeth-to-tusk of striving men; men willing to stride into the future to sacrifice what is in their mouth right now .* “This was always haloed, given over to hagiocracy of the State, and panegyrics by man, this future tense, a reified good according to them,” he said aloud as the Jack’s heads bowed in sleepiness; he heard Jack come up the path. Even that cleared path looked unrighteous to him now. Then he heard Jack as he veered off the trod ground and into the sticker bushes and weeds, the grasses and bugs and grasshoppers jumped and moved and some were crushed as he moved laterally from the trail. His ears told him all this, not his eyes; he stared at the fire rocks and burnt logs.

But he knew he’d have to think long-term to gain this immediate desire. *It was a conundrum* , he admitted. *He’d have to give up the crown to get them to gather ‘round. He’d have to forget his true desire to stay warm without a fire,* he thought -suspicious they were listening in- in third person and in code too.

He thought of the rat -whose tooth grew unless worn down- into the brain to commit *seppuku* .

## 44. Meaneſt Mariners

If, then, to meanest mariners, and renegades and castaways, I shall hereafter ascribe high qualities, though dark; weave round them tragic graces, if even the most mournful, perchance the most abased among them all, shall at times lift himself to the exalted mounts; if I shall touch that workman's arm with some ethereal light

The Whale [The Author]

In pious times, *ere* priestcraft did begin,  
Before polygamy was made a sin;  
When man on many multiplied his kind,  
*Ere* one to one was cursedly confined  
When nature prompted, and no law denied,  
Promiscuous use of concubine and bride;  
The Israel's monarch after heaven's own heart,  
His vigorous warmth did variously impart  
To wives and slaves; and, wide as his command  
Scattered his Maker's image through the land  
Absalom and Achitophel [Dryden, John]

And, Behold, I -even I- do bring a flood of waters upon the earth  
Genesis 6:17 [King James Bible]

### **I. 2039 e.v.**

"You don't get it. I don't give one fuck about western civilization, Blax. I don' t care," Jack said. He held a pinecone in the hand and was taking it apart without looking at it. The fingers were calloused enough to feel none of its barbs.

"It's a fucking abstraction, it's this big lumbering species that ought return to the sea," he said. His eye twitched on the left side and the lip rose a bit as if two hooks had been sunk in him to pull the lid down and the lip up.

Blax was searching his brain to try to turn the boy -the man-around but then he realized he hadn't really heard him. And -fearing he had missed something, and maybe even sinned- he stopped his CNS's roiling and scheming and thinking and replayed what Jack had said again in his brain.

Jack Four just stood there; they both stood there as Blax listened again. The wind had died down for a few moments yet the trees bounced still from the last wave of air to come over the ridge. A Redhawk lowered its left wing into the ravine's air and drew a line with its distal feathers underlining the dark bottom of grey clouds.

Blax thought of the hippogriffs of the *Eclogues* , and an image of the Bust came into his head as if beset by actual feathered birds. Then bronze arrows of headdress made shadow on *metopes* and then each leading edge appeared as the sun moved west. He pricked finger tips on each of five; then held the plumages behind in the palm of his mind. Drops of the blackest blood rose like half a Spartan globe. He smeared it on the tines of her shadow lines. He thought of the theory of the hippos returning to the sea as whales; he thought of erstwhile bacteria like the *Mimivirus* who had reverted to the mean of the prokaryotic cell. He knew, in his heart, what Jack was feeling and it swamped him, drowned him, in sixty-five years of three-sea layers of doubt and regret and ponderous *anomie* .

At once he waswhelmed. He could no longer see. He could only feel. He felt himself begin to kneel.

He had to think of her -the coder had failed to keep her at bay, embayed- and his anger rose at his grief; his legs remained erect; his chin level with his line of sight. *Spy versus spy* , he thought in black and white and stared at the cone in Jack's hand.

He'd forestalled all that he'd wanted, all that he was built for -all that he was good at- to build this contraption -*this rube*

*Goldberg device of a thing* , he thought- before him. His heart -then hands- ached to lay upon this man, this tool, this plot. He had done it to protect and preserve and defend the greatest civilization the planet had ever seen or been reared by. *And Jack wanted to put a bullet in its head, a mercy kill, and let it fucking die*, he thought and Blax couldn't come up with a reason to argue with him at all.

He -Jack- seemed so large in his fore. Blax couldn't look around him. He got in the way of even his eyes.

Jack put his left hand on Blax and squeezed and felt it still large and hard but the finger pads felt their way sufficiently around the old man's shoulder now. Jack too looked around and saw the clouds low, the trees inert and the birds circle in sorties out over the drop to their shelf here at *Lot 45*.

Blax saw his Jack in front but the mind blurred the eyes -that data from the eyes- and an inner landscape seemed -at once- all around him. Salt flats and leaves of grass and the spiral of downed cones cold and tight; a desert of blue sky. Genes cascaded in AGCT combinations, hundreds, then thousands of enzymes long in his head like sentences from some lost book -in some language he once knew- but that needed -required- breaks between letters in order to read them. He saw the Monoamine Oxidize A short-chain allele repeat in clusters under rubrics that ran over each set like a roof, like his father's hand over his head when he'd once been measured.

*God* -he recollected he was once a boy- *I was once measured by that man* .

He recalled the way his father had set him -not unlovingly- in the door jamb of the old house in Germany, the lignite coal in the cellar, the fear that came with each night, the white paint on everything like lard, icing, a hundred winter's snow. He saw Lee's hand there over his head to mark where



he came to on the jamb, and saw the categories over each set of alleles:

**Indo-European Comanche Maori Mongol Scoti**

AGCTTCGTC GLCGCTCACG GTAGCTGCTT TAGACAAG  
TCCAAGTACG

And he saw the genes glow like so long ago; like the *Medea* allele in the elk. He saw the Rosetta stone, the common ancestor walk back as if his own life was too in rewind, *and it appeared like seedling then mottled seed then shadow on the ground as if from cloud and a million nutrients in soil from a billion worms casting off their refuse and some first ray of sun -some first rise in temperature- some first movement not by wind but from within and it was the...* he paused: *The Scythians* .

His coder let this information Jack had held in him like his own ovum burst inside like spittle on the face from some tirade, like cross contamination from blood-borne pathogens, like rhyme makes a man sing his ABCs. The mycelium breathed. He saw the slanted cross of the Good Thief, he heard the absence of a plea.

The air was full of spores.

He believed in dignity. He realized he'd been imbibing from the forest this whole time. From that first shard of light, and now still filled with this psilocybin analog, this new thing that rose to the level of their knees and he comprehended how often he had prayed. *My God*, he thought, *each time I prayed I lowered my nose to that pelagic layer, and breathed the earth's new code, new code, new motherlode.*

And when Jack pulled away his hand these visions and understandings disappeared like the explosion of dynamite robbed the derrick-fire of necessary oxygen and snuffed it out at once in dust and soot and smoke. *Concussive waves* , he almost thought, but did not.

Instead he just watched the hand and arm -of Jack- pull away.

He had given up so much to raise these Jacks, he thought as he had looked up and away from the wounds, interrupted the feelings, swallowed pride & pain beyond what he thought he could take, and yet he had took it. And he had done it with purpose as his only real fuel to this machine that went on and on. And it was a machine. He saw Jack now in his fore and saw a machine. Its perfections, its lack of curves, its space, malice, some metal -electric- root. *The PGC always on, always blocking errant thoughts*, Blax supposed and then recalled how he had warned them not to use this block -post-genetic neural block- of conscience and memory and feeling in order to carry out the mission.

*The mission becoming more and more of all their lives.*

It was a machine -he was himself an automaton, he briefly thought- it was a machine that he'd used -that he'd believed in- to carry their fight for this thing that his boy -that was him in some way- didn't even want.

*How many times had he worked so hard for shit he didn't even want in life? My God , he thought. All that bullshit I had fought for: some woman who was a whore; some object that held no power -slaked no real desire- once acquired; some idea that turned to ash, then dust, then nothing at all in this head.*

He saw the white flies spin in a shard of light like dust; he heard a buzz. He heard that Jack didn't breathe.

*But occidental culture had been above that, it had been large -grand, spacious- big enough for us all to ride, capacious enough inside to house them, it contained all the great works of literature and art and oenology and the artisanal and the poetic and theurgic, and promethean , he thought in that manner he had of making detailed lists with more and more need of the Oxford comma. The genes cascaded in four letters, the words in twenty-six. He saw forty-six names and a hundred and forty-four pains rattled*

like hitting piano key up his spine until it crescendo in the neck. He winced and his coder issued a narcotic at once but he belayed it in pique -in anger- at his own hypocrisy.

His throat hurt like he might not be able to swallow any more.

Blax thought, *it -the West- was not tawdry and low and commercial like the countries themselves; the peoples themselves; it was above them, it was still pure, was it not? Yes? Please?* He asked himself and he asked God.

He still heard that Jack had no need to breathe.

But he knew what Jack meant. He knew it the more he answered against it. *Opposites growing like helix, like phoenix, like...* he paused. The more he argued his side the more Jack's side came into relief. *It was too big, too complex, that was its fault* -he thought of *Der Tod und die Wollust* in Prague - *not that it had been damaged or sullied or riven from neglect. It was too big, it tried to do too much, it wanted* -he thought now he could see that it wanted- *to return to the sea and be buoyed so that its girth and weight need not hold itself up on this ethereal, numinous substance they all lumbered through upon the land . My God how hard it is to remain upright on the land?*

*But the sea, the sea* , he thought with chagrin at how often he mentioned God now.

He breathed in that air and suddenly halted as if such an act would also weight him down.

"Fuck," he finally said -with an expulsion of air jammed with CO<sup>2</sup> - and Jack placed a hand on the old man's neck now and breathed shallowly so as to not make a sound. He could see the romantic in Blax there -here & now- the way he was defeated -not merely despondent- by this loss of the West in the mind. Jack saw right then the way their genome was

romantic and why, and how and thus -now- truly *why* at a much deeper level.

"I just want something small, simple, primitive, LT," Jack said, giving Blax -the man- his rank back; a *beau geste* , an offering, a decent thing to say. A lie.

His own mind filled with the genes he sought, that he'd pick up in his ships that he saw at night -each night in his dreams as his bunk lay lower than theirs, low enough to breathe in the effluvium of the earth- but they were not genes, they were men. He saw men -isolatoes- of *Mongolian* decent, *M ā ori* unbent, *Kalenjin* made from lives with no ease, *Bushido Japanese* , and yes, his bearded & broad-chested *Scoti's* .

He saw them at taffrail and in the nest, on quarterdeck five abreast. He saw them at capstan and in league with the Captain that he must advise more and more. He heard his own whispers to the man in charge. He had a job to do, one of many; *e pluribus unum* , he thought and smiled at the irony.

"A return to the sea," Blax said -interrupting Jack's own ideas of ship not sea- and then Blax thought of his own bride and their nearly two-year old child, and how simple and perfect it all was; if he was just simple enough to love it all. *Why did he try to tame such large areas of the universe, make ordered -Apollonian- cosmos where Dionysian blackness once was? Why map the whole universe, why usurp God like that?* he asked. He didn't encode his thoughts.

He let Jack rifle through him with the *bots* if he wanted, he opened his PGC to him again in magnanimous defeat.

But Jack didn't access it; he was *ok* to let the man have his privacy in his head now; he had taken enough of what he needed from Blax. Jack showed some class. But his own

thoughts would go on and on out into each empty space and Blax would think -drink- from the things all the clones knew - the common hive of mind- as long as Jack held his hand there at the damaged neck, the neck with even the throat collapsing now, side-by-side with the starbursting spine.

Jack breathed loudly just to calm the old man; to ensure him that he was -in fact- human.

"The Jacks are too perfect, LT," Jack Four said *apropos* of nothing. "They live with a quarter-million clones just as perfect as themselves. They accomplish way more than me and the *Wolves* ever will. And yet they miss the fucking point. The *Wolves* are less, as men they are less. But so is man. Man is less. And without less, there can be no God.

"Man is only possible if God retreats. And a King is only elected by men less than he," Jack said as Blax looked out over the feral wilderness of the southeast. He saw ruddy slip rock and sage green trees and a sky vacant of anything with designs. He felt the heat of Jack's hand and the pain lessened there and increased on the other side.

"I wanted men who could get better, improve, and thus they had to have the possibility for sin. I needed them to be below me, so I had a chance to lead them. The Jacks can't lead their own men, they are too good already. They are exactly the same as they are; they need no improvement, just instructions. They are plug & play, man.

"That's what western civilization is, LT. It's all too perfect already; it has no room for what we as men -as *Wolves* - want to do. It has all the answers, just ask it," he said and laughed with little to no mirth. And of course he lied, Jack lied about leadership and his role. He left out the nuances of what he'd do and what he'd need and from whom.

"I understand," Blax said and he did; and he hated that he understood. He felt his whole life was a lie except one truth,

one thing he could do that would be true. His own hand rose and covered Jack's upon the neck and throat.

"We want to begin the world again. We want to start over from scratch. We see the Black Sun as a thresher and we feel we've reached the center now and are ready to move through it past this ornate and over-wrought bullshit. We want *war* again; we want it. And LT, the war is here. It is here. You know that it's upon us and there is no going back now. It is time for destroying; a creative destroying.

"Isaiah has unleashed it; allowed it. And only the primitives will remain now. Anything more complex than us will perish; they won't last three days after today. The Jacks will survive, thrive even. But I swear it, if they try to rebuild that monstrosity again with all the democracy and individualistic bullshit, me and the *Wolves* will put our finger in their eye. I swear it," he said.

"I know," Blax said as he kept staring out at the sky; it seemed larger over the shrinking land. He wondered where the clouds were; he had thought it might rain today. That one ray with the flies had gone away. The smoke from the fires was just haze.

"Leave it all buried; ok, just let that shit stay wherever it is," Jack said and squeezed Blax's neck as if he were now the King of Jacks and Blax saw the black bones tattooed on each finger with the OATTH runes inked just below the large knuckles that had been alloyed with bronze and titanium - and luminescent bacterium- under the skin. Jack's hand was bent and straight in odd ways, it was black and white equally this way, and it looked like the hand of patient Death -watching as they blinded the clock-maker- and himself no longer a mere man.

## **II. 2040 e.v.**

Isaiah loaded this newest -the 4<sup>th</sup> *gen* - *Medea* gene onto one vector of CRISPR-cas9/13.

He let it uncoil inside the bacteriophage and then allowed it to enter the small aquarium he had built for his new reticulated python. The python sniffed the air with her tongue and the aquarium next to it remained dark.

Isaiah allowed the polymer box to reduce opacity and the *Argentine* ants began to move in rows toward the small aperture he had built into the eastern side of the tank.

He saw the Chinese nationals had already begun their expeditionary missions inland from the coasts, they were coming not by sea but by air. They were landing from HALO drops and moving in five-man units. They were equipped with cloaking *bots* -invisible to their prey- and they followed the *nanobots* loaded sufficiently to kill each law enforcement officer in each town of 60,000 or less within ninety-seconds from first to last. *They were planning -again- to hollow out the country from its interior*, he thought as he ignored them for now.

He turned from the counter and allowed the membrane to become permeable as the ants entered the two aquariums on either side. The *nanobot* with the *Medea* gene -as the ants came in- located each organism and laid base-pair larva just at the root of the brain.

MO was talking with Steven as Steven was rubbing his head and then cheeks in distress. Isaiah thought of issuing a *benzo* to him but deferred and let the man feel his stress. *It was not the hormesis of elevation, but it might do the man some good anyway*, Isaiah thought with a grin.

He had issued iodine *nanobots* to Jack Four so he could dose each of his people as the radiation would hit their region in 120 hours or less. *The bots would keep the iodine levels high enough to absorb the mutagenic gamma rays for up to*



*nine months without needing updated* , he had surmised. He rolled his neck and issued himself a boost of androgens and endogenous opiates to quell the pain from his deadlifts twelve hours previous and to knock down his nerves about his trip.

He monitored caloric expenditure and adjusted it by 3%.

He watched the underground compound, that 35-acres of concrete and steel and water and glass just below *Lot 45* ; accessing his cameras and the drones that monitored air *temp* and humidity and both watered & thinned the vineyards deep underground. He liked thinking Blax and Valance and the baby were above it, oblivious to it, *but holding it down*, he added with a genuine smile. He then reminded himself to inject them with the same iodine *bots* ; sending a DM-*kite* to the corvids he had augmented the previous year to disperse all future updates for Blax and The Bust and The Child.

He thought too of how the *magicicada* would rise now and inoculate the forest's predator and prey with the same genomic augmentation he had built seventeen years before. He checked his list.

They -these long-game insects he admired so much- had incubated their special genomic payload, allowed its power to accrue slowly in the germ of those one-million flying bugs. He allowed himself a moment of hubris, he enjoyed how he had planned for each contingency, even though war had never been guaranteed, and had -at one point- dropped to a mere one chance in five.

His smile grew as he thought of all that bedrock, all that ancient sea-bed, that limestone of southern Colorado perfectly suited for the gravel layer one mile thick above it. Isaiah had blasted all that *terroir* over the last 20 years - using micro-harmonics *via nanobots* - to make, to build, to destroy, the substrate for the First Growth's vine stock -itself

now almost 60-months into their life-cycle- underground. He had made gravel between this millions-of-years-old bedrock and the poor soil on the floor and 10-meters down from the concrete rooms that spread out in five spokes to a wheel; an *anteroom* that housed the *stele* of the Author and all his progeny spread out like tendrils to a lateral flank of just six names; five men and a woman; the four Jacks, a King and a Queen.

*All, he thought, of one genome, like haploid diploid eusocial ants.* He admired how different they had become despite their identical blueprint to this life.

Isaiah then tapped into the drones inside the *anteroom* and watched inside the hub of the vineyard and art rooms from a POV just north -and 74" from the floor- that contained the concrete *stele* ; the artifact, the monument, the map.

The *bas relief's* watery pores slicked it -high-calcium water with a 7.1 *pH* was excreted from a well that ran behind and out of it- and each member of the family, the blown seed of The Author landing on the large rock like empires, like dirt mounds, burial mounds, the *mothe* of the pubic mound of each young girl, rose and lit up and was also riven and cut down into the surface.

It all grew soft in appearance as the mist lay upon the hard lith.

He let each genome build itself in his mind as he watched it and let the audio play as Lyndon told and re-told the story of his great great-uncle and the vastness of that man and all men it was assumed, implied, in the prose-poem he read off into the hub of that room.

He updated this version of the white-shark's aquarium, he spied the fish swimming languidly in the middle of its predatory cycle, he moved to each room and ran his mind like fingers through grass on each painting and the leaves of

each ancient book they had stored. He saw the Philosopher's original notebooks stand out today as he perused, and Isaiah placed his mind's finger on the shopping list the man had written over his *Will to Power* , *feuilleton* .

*Ah , the Marbles* , he then thought- and his mind lay down by *Dionysus* himself in repose. Isaiah's mind's index finger was upon the scorpion by the Lion's paw carved into the stone. He licked his lips at the cedar and pine boxes of OWC of the back vintages that had stacked up to the concrete ceiling 10-meters high; and of course, the vineyards themselves. He let each *nanobot* and hummingbird and wasp buzz around giving him one million points of view of the plants as they grew and the noble rot of the juice collected like crowns around each grape-cluster in the autumnal decline toward winter.

He updated and uploaded the whole *mise-en-scène* to the topo-map he had in his CNS; the one Lyndon lived in now and roamed about for six hours a day. The inmate was asleep from 0600 to 2359hrs each day. Isaiah let the inmate's dreams populate his own *sub-cortical* regions as he moved -in slight *s-turns* - on his side of the lab. He breathed, and he felt the man -inside him- breathing too. *Imagine lungs within lungs, homunculus within man himself*, Isaiah thought. *A god within a God*.

He let the grape clusters begin to rot and mimic the winter solstice sun with LEDs that hovered above each node and each leaf and each brachial derivation and the hummingbirds drank from one out of each one-hundred grapes exchanging whatever the plant needed for this 1% of juice.

He had augmented the birds to produce micronutrients in their saliva as the tongue licked the grape the vine stock would take what it needed; and the grapes did not need

much. They were hearty, low-maintenance, and preferred poverty to great luxury.

And yet -and everyone who knew wine knew this, but it bore repeating- from this stunted *milieu* they produced the most luxurious nectar of gods. *This vintage will be as sweet as the Sauternes*, he thought.

"Ah, what man could learn from the grape," Isaiah said as the watched -from the POV of *Lansat10* satellites- the last of the warheads land in the dark Pacific.

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

He walked to the edge of the sliprock prow of his acreage, *the lands not by birth but had by wit*, he thought.

The landscape was not unlike the sea; *Mount Arat* as the dove flew away. The topography was silvery as if jetted spray and at night, the sun behind him and his shadow broken up on the scrub desert foliage and the dark-earth brown of the ground.

He had shed all clothes except his LBE with carbine on lanyard and a bear skull mounted to his molle-pack, the thumb size head-bones of white rats on bronze ball-chain ringed around him like icons of the ancient church; and last, one shell of .300 Winmag in brass. Black briefs were taut on loins and black boot shod him. He was covered in dust as anemophily pollen, and the wind combed each hair on each leg and arm and could not penetrate the beard long at chin like Sphinx's head in the age of the Lion of the *Poisson Distribution's* Leo; when the rain of the ice-age thaw was sufficient to weather the hewn blocks of the Terrifying One.

The red-crow tail feather lay down on his temporal lobe from a quill that was plaited with his hair along the line carved high; all else below shaved to the bone.

His jaw was set, his eyes fixed, his mind was certain of all things that mattered in this moment.

He stood just inside the known now; the unknown had been met and he had wrestled mystery beasts and drank dark blood from hazy upturned skulls, taken medicine from unnamed buttoned plants and uninspected roots. He built fires that seemed less illuminating than the moon and all meat laureled in the silver dew of condensing water extracted from the unpenetrated air. He stopped processing information through his Broca's region and allowed the collated data in which it had given narration to be -in fact- handed like a palmed note, a kite, passed from monkish cell, to his left brain so it may clear its throat and speak into his inner ear.

The fiat currency had been minted now.

He could speak his true mind.

It looked cooled and unmovable in *daguerreotype* in his mind's eye. He had the certainty that lasted a little while for men like him; he got a moment -maybe two- to be sure of anything, this is how it had been his whole life; but things moved faster now, he figured a few days of this confidence before he'd dive again below into the aquarium he felt beneath his feet. The right brain did all the heavy lifting at night, and in semiotics, from information on the wind, from shadows in trees, from the flaps of Blackhawk wings, from hidden spaces in between inelegant words of civilians unguarded here and suspicious there, from small clues dropped by the vernal night's blackened bears; from remembrances and re-instantiated memories of Scotland and New Zealand and the southern towns from Paris, Texas to Little Rock and Texarkana and swimming holes in the panhandle of Florida and the Cumberland of Kentucky; his mountaineering of Pikes and Longs and Greys, his hike up the Spanish peaks with his working dog, Caius Martius II, his

deep dive at 60 feet in the dead Caribbean and fecund Pacific off *Oahu* with rays leaping over girls he had held hands with in tropic rains outside Buddhist temples as no words were needed nor sanctioned.

Dreams in between fourteen and sixteen-hour days of hammering concrete and drilling holes and bailing hay and breaking back and compressing vertebrae and rending tendons and making muscles dense as they buried their strength deep were where his semiotic mind mined and quarried and hew and drew succor and basalt and hydrocarbons from.

He had been alive on this planet and had made something of himself, however deformed and craquelured and wicked and wrong.

He spent each coin in some meter or toll booth on the periphery of where he would stride into next; the assemblage of all their work to protect and use as seed, seedbank for this new island, oasis in the forest of so much of America unclaimed. So much of this country was un-lived in, unexplored, and most thought she was over run. They - *tout le monde*- had no idea the millions and millions of acreage of total wilderness still, and unlike the slaves of the west they had captured it and would now settle it.

It was a new frontier of pioneers, a land of the emotionally honest, those who knew the science of the brain, and the heart, who knew what they needed and what was superfluous, and would fight and growl and rut and rub their butts together and laugh and hold hands and howl at the crescent moon and bow humbly when the sun rose again each day. They would not care what others say.

"Fuck 'em," he said aloud.

They'd revivify the ancients, the wise King, the civilization once built on dreams; and fears of the dragon at heel, the

red gold flakes, the coiled snake stacked nine high in the corner, the chaos of the cypher mind. *My God* , he thought, *man knew nothing of his own soul then, only that the gods possessed him and ran him wild with lust and anger and madness and they prayed to manifold gods -Venus and Martial Mars- like superpositions until the wave collapse of Yahweh and the prism then of Christ unweaving the rainbow again and then the white light, the singularity of God as man pulled each other out of the muck over and over for two thousand years, until they had grown tired from all those hands, all those hands of men unknown to them.*

The tribal systems of twelve, the rapid expansion of the nations, the leniency that invited doom into its own house; the failure of walls to keep all snakes out of the paradisaal house.

America: the last walled garden.

*They had the Law written on their hearts* , he then thought. They knew right from wrong, they had the data, the genome of the ancients, they walked like Highlanders, down past the valley of *Deveron* turning their noses up to commerce, mere business, as Robert Gordan had said of the “*better classes of Scotsmen* ” that “*they disdain trade as unsuitable to their birth* ” and that to alleviate the poverty that comes to men of honor they “*address themselves to the profession of arms* .”

They knew their history, and so they had a million million men behind them so that they had foundation to ignore these diseased merchant classes as they insisted on how men were to behave.

His men were warrior poets. His mind was a centrifugal orb filled with pride and burning the tears as fuel for love for those men living down below, in the wood, among the creatures that still deserve God’s love.

The hardest part of any revolution is not the thing itself, the bullets drop all men quickly and that is that. The hard part is the will, *the will*, the strength to go all the way, to not hem and haw and wish and wash, to act, clearly, rightly, without hesitation or regret. That is the drama in each man, and each country and each emergent *Tao* of life. He admired the *Bushido* and the *Mongol* on the steppe; he admired the Chinese, as they would rebound from this and never, ever give up. It was in their blood.

The modern man is unable to act, he rules by committee of 10,000 contradictory parts, all with incompatible motivations, all with different facts and faces and visions that they each cannot see. Democracy is a death sentence; it's like Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, it killed itself by insisting on the truth and heaven *after* earth; as if something was superior to the dirt. Democracy had to insist on diversity, and thus expanding inflationary chaos and the center could not hold. *We may wish -he thought- to mix the races and cultures and each type of man, include the enemy and be objective in negotiation with those that want to immolate the nation. We may want it, but it cannot work. Integration is infiltration,* he thought.

Fidel had said that *within the revolution everything, todos; but outside it or against it, nada.*

"Nothing," he said.

Castro had been criticized by liberals and modern men who didn't land a ship on the beach *Pinar*, with eight-two men and in one day that number reduced to a holy of just twelve; including the apostle himself. They had not the luxury to take a goddamn vote for each thing; it was war then and the reason Castro kept the beard was because he had promised to shave it off only once the revolution had succeeded.

He died with that face hirsute and the revolution undone.



Blax knew none would understand how he could admire an enemy like Fidel. Only Coriolanus and Patton would get it. He stared in the direction of the forge and thought of each sword he'd made. He saw the folding and striping and felt the heat upon the face. He recalled a dream now and he felt it as memory but labeled it a dream anyway:

The tribe had fled from the *El Barta Plains* . They were the *Samburu* of modern Kenya but they never once used that name. The woman had shorn the head and scarred the flesh in lines on bicep and cheek and her dark skin seemed a relief to the keloidal brown of the scar tissue. She seemed a shadow under these ridges.

Golden Hyenas sang out from the edge of the eastern plain.

"*Nkunono* ," she said and pointed to the white ash in their own forge. He knew she was claiming the title like 'convict' or 'redneck' with both pride and resignation. She was one of four blacksmith of the community and what she cleaved the tribe had used but with ingratitude. They saw her as a witch, a devil's instrument.

This village was in fact a banishment. The actual tribe lived on an oasis of the *Barta* . Only the four huts of the ironworkers were here.

A child, covered in borax and ash emerged from a hut with a feather in his hand and called Blax, *papa* as he pulled the tines up and away from the quill. The child asked for ink and Blax offered a dram from his hand.

Infected iron wounds, circumcision gone awry from the improvement on stone razors, and accidents befalling those that trod over forge, all led to council meetings and banishment to the periphery. But it was the incest -

for the blacksmiths married only among themselves- that gave the *hoi polloi* the no choice.

Blax recalled an article he once read, or was it a thought once inside his head?

With the possible exceptions of the wolf, the raven and the crone, no one has a closer mythological connection with malevolence than the smith.

Blax recalled the European folklore of *Pathseas*, the evil blacksmith that had been made lame, maimed by the King of Ninths. Blax remembered the painting of *Hephaestus* behind the bricks, he had vivid memories of the licks the flames shot into the air like asps when they sniff.

And it was the children, Blax admitted in image but not yet word, it was the little ones that came to the smith and his forge. The sons killed and skulls boiled to make chalice and daughter devoured to make a forge of her own. *Pathseas* had made the King drink from his son's skulls and placed a drop of semen in each goblet of wine.

"Wings," Blax said as he saw the bronzed feathers imbricate; like scales, like plumage, like Will o' Whisps of eastern isle England. He too given a double life, he too a second chance to do it right.

"Leap, leap, leap," Blax said as he carried Valance over the forge in this dream within a dream,

"They believe the iron poisons the soil," the woman said, "they cannot abide nor bury it. They merely ask us to solve their problems as we live on the edge of the desert."

Iron Age forges were outside settlements of the northern Europeans.

But Blax then came upon Lake Victoria and kingdoms rose high in architecture and sinecure and he saw tinctures in amber and aubergine. Here the anvil was the semaphore, here the smith was King.

Valence watched Blax from the roof of the container, she had climbed up from the pad with her babe swaddled in the grey wolf hide lined with polar fleece black and smooth and warmed by *nanobots* that regulated the child's *temp* and circulation both. She had braided her hair on the sides as it had grown out and it was a *cicatrix manet* of mane, black and ravened wet and her dorsal hair rose in waves that undulate. The plaited braids long enough to cup each small breast like halter and tie back behind her in a Gordian Knot; a grey-corvid feather was intertwined and nested on her lee side; and milk drops let down from her left breast to the babe with mouth so small it need no justification.

Her neck was freshly tattooed with the death-head and bones in 22, the *haglax*, the coldest grain, like Blax. And within the ink he had mixed in his blood -and the sanguinary drop taken from their child- that morning as they rose. They had not spoken all day, sharing thoughts via *psilocybin muscariate*; a telepathy of the PGC, the pineal gland and lower layer down. They spoke in touch and glance and breath.

She was sore still from the birth, she was sore in her narrow rib cage and tiny breasts -mounds he had cupped and called, *en bon point*, with a mild *franco-accent* and grin and she had felt beautiful and adored by a man from deep within history and topography and the ovum of nature herself. She was aching like muscles strengthening and made dense and mercurial, from the heaviest load she could carry for three seasons; the crow had made three trips to visit her and the lone wolf but one.

She was his -Blax's- *anima* in flesh, birthed from his rib too.

She wondered how sore was he out there on the edge; how close to death.

*The metaphors all came to life under his rule* , she thought. He was a Poet-king, a Rex-talionis, a King of sage-retribution. He paid back the gods for their poetry with making it all come to life; the *logos* of articulated trope and embodied avatars of the mind. She was his daughter, wife and Queen and each phase in between. This was no democracy, the man ruled *by sovereignty*.

"Of nature," she said aloud. He had made it so by daring to say it all aloud.

*Blax* -she thought his name in reverie- *and his men had set things right, aimed and hit the mark, for now, and in this small space of Colorado. Let it be an exemplar to the nation herself, if She has any sense and any pride and any honor left to want what is clearly best, what women want in their wombs twice as real as their modern neo-cortex; what men need and deserve marked in feral land by planted flags of endocrine-built staffs* .

Valance thought this and thus said it; and they both heard it.

She saw him, out there on the prow with her augmented 2.5x visual acuity like the Osprey; pupils dilated to absorb the photons of the grey light turned to purple and the landscape pulled back in the night. She read her poem to him:

The yellow sun to red Rayleigh hues was best, the moon north by north-west, casting an albedo shadow of his striations and deltoids shaped aquiline, his quads cornered in forty-fives. Unforgiving angularities like *Szukulski's* castings of the Merman, the *Cecora* . His head a black & grey Roman mane and charger of *Charlemagne* . His chest, she saw and felt, like Goethe's

and filled with a hundred barrels of the sperm whale's *ambergris*, as she whispered, *Unity, not Diversity is our strength.*

The ground first vibrated under the light of the vault.

They both felt it at the end of each piloerect hair and on the surface cells of the dermis; the ears rattled inside and at the spinal cord creating a slight elevation in allostatic correction; overridden by their PGCs as they recaptured a calm. They laughed at fear; even as it was real.

Apertures opened, fissures riven, and translucent *magicicadas* emerged head first, crowning, grasping, certain. On thirty-five acres, 45-million of the cicadae broke through and flew into the lower boughs of the 1.5 million trees of their land; uninterested in the larger forest outside his command.

As the first 60-minutes passed they each -from white-edged clear- darkened in hue, and the shadows of the tress moved 12-degrees along the northern sweep. The *tymbals* began rubbing in Greek Chorus and Blax & Valance allowed the noise to rise to 88db in their ears before having to countermand -with the wave of the virtual hand- the PGCs automatic order to deaden the sound over 86-decibels.

It rose. Despite the coder it rose.

It rose as the wings rubbed and the males sent emissaries one by one to females to mate and it rose as each individual added to the chorus and it rose to 99db and their ears captured it in logarithmic madness and the skin's pores absorbed the waves now, and the eyes watered and purged the swells of sound, and the knuckles bent at angles to harmonize, and the mind made bow and string both, and each felt each other's thoughts collapse on themselves as the noise overwhelmed, the wing-beats fanned each neuron and they felt lifted.

They felt lifted off the ground by the wing beats, the *tymbals* now at 100-decibels.

The magic copulations continued and rose in fright and noise and flight and the racket and the ontological purpose, the perfect direction of God with the algorithmic music of the long-overtured song; the rhythm; the chorus; the red eyes like Mars mirrored and pointing toward war. And the black eyes saw -like the edge containing all flesh of *pax* - the heads turned sideways like opposing-Jacks and the manifold Queen bowed down in penitence. The Jacks in reverie and awe, as the congress between them, millions of them produced scores and scores of eggs each compressed into hours not weeks, a *blitzkrieg* of ovum and partum and birth.

He saw what his death was worth.

The females sawed tropes of vulva like Hindu *stele* -like recursions of femininity- in tree branches -like arms of *Vishnu* - to lay the spawns and the larval eggs did hatch and drop tooth and wingtip to the forest floor and the predators had never seen such a surfeit -such bounty- of expendable hatchlings.

And they did feast, and they did gorge.

And so few were the predatory insects and small mammals, so kept in check by this timed and planned and body-of-God knowledge and wisdom -wisdom of dearth- by the holding back hand of God for 6,200 days that the bounty of God did cloy and did outnumber and of the 5.56 billion eggs, 90 million babes made it 8-inches below ground -so much waste, unwasted, so much honing, unhoned, *so much talus removed from the pieta* , and survived. It survived and closed their white eyes and the roots of the tree, exactly matching the fractal boughs above did give succor and comfort for now.

*The fractal of comfort for now* , she thought.

They at once, in first *instar* -the juveniles- began feeding on the roots of the *Pinions* and *Junipers* and *Aspens* that they had images of from their fathers -their fathers' first-time above ground in 17-years- and here in 2040 *anno domini* they did rise.

They did rise.

They did rise and the next generation did bury themselves again.

In the soil, hidden so the fat predators -as fat as cormorant singularities- so that the predators that feasted upon them could have nothing for another generation of 16 plus 1 solar-years. So that they could not swell in number themselves; it was the perfect mathematics of predatory deterrence, to hide underground giving the enemy nothing to feed on until the predators' numbers shrank back down and down and down; starved, made infertile from lack, reverting to lower forms -like bacteria eschewing complexity to become virus again, like hippos returning to sea as whales- in the perfect -incomprehensible- magic of God's ability to plan a million years of a billion beings as if it was planning the tempo of one man's forgotten breath in and out of slate-grey tobacco smoke.

The cicada contained the new DNA.

They'd fly to the wolves of the forest and anneal the blood with code and the wolves would be hunted down by the Jacks and each man -both the Jacks and their brothers of 144,000 and the *Wolves of Vinland* of 25,920 and their variegated genome- would drink of the upturned skull and be impervious to the second order x-rays.

*War would be tantamount to love and pax would appear from pox. The species would evolve.*

*And a new atmosphere would appear and these four tribes would fight; and like all of God's equation -outside this little orb of earth- there would be movement towards a fragile but enduring balance , he thought as he felt his body begin to shut down*

Blax and Valance saw through the same eyes, saw with the same mind, signals from the same spine up the brain stem and *basal ganglia* and *amygdala* and into the *neo-cortex* as they saw, they heard, they felt all at once the collapse of the sounds as each of the fathers and mothers did die and fall to the floor with no more weight than the soul.

They felt it rumble from below.

A foxed paper with black typewriter font in French - translated to English at once- came up on his interface:

“...or rather it would be irrecoverable, were it not that a few words (such as: chief undersecretary at the Postmaster General's) had been carefully put away and forgotten, much as a copy of a book is deposited in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* against the day when it may become unobtainable.”

These words floated by like cold air with maybe just a hint of cottonwood or dandelion that had lost its head, and he thought, *pain is a kiss of God , they said, lack is a gift, they rejoined , suffering is prelude to genius* . He and her each felt this and they knew that they too were a generation apart and conjoined and that their perfection would never be tarnished and their wounds would never be healed.

This is how suffering is justified -to those callow and puerile atheists, sincere but stupid and *effete* - this is how all madness and evil and the shadow lays down on the ground from the perpendicular omnipotence that stands at cross-roads, at right angle, at 90-degrees between sun and man on the surface; a stage and all players in an evolving God of



all. *All complaints* shall be as loud as the collapse of 100db of the *tymbals* of the patient and sacrificial and magic creations.

*Those briefly alighting wings*, Blax thought as he fell with a heart that had finally stopped its squirming into the hole he had dug, *stopped by and to the dead-head hammer of ground; as the lights of the universal sanction go out* .

#### **IV. 2018 e.v.**

MO read his brain waves, and vitals and took a full genomic reading again to see which genes were being coded for and which were being suppressed; which were in apoptosis and which were ignoring those signals and growing in rebellion to the interest of the whole.

The man seemed at metabolic peace, no doubt the alcohol helped.

His allostatic system was balanced, his endocrine system in line. He had spoken some kind of truth as his body's biometrics revealed. He was calm, serene, no longer burdened by having to lie -to over build his *façade* - merely to survive in the world. He was already in jail, what else could they do to him?

He was as punished as he could be.

He felt totally free to speak his mind; and had for quite some time, it seemed to MO. The man's body and brain was very healthy, MO beleived. The project as outlined by PraXis to identify and repair the six alleles associated with psychopathy made this inmate an unlikely candidate. He was not psychopathic despite the body count and lack of remorse. He was a warrior, a man of extreme vengeance, a man of the past. *That made him atavistic, not psychopathic* . *This was a distinction of science, at the level of the brain, not the subjunctive or the narrative* , MO thought.

“What started it, what was patient zero?” MO asked as he thought of a few ideas on what they could change. But he couldn’t foreclose on one idea of the man. He thought he should tinker a bit but because a man was finite he’d have to pick one and let it play out over eighty to a hundred years. This seemed silly to MO.

“Julee Rae made a comment once that I’ll never repeat; but it ruined my soul,” he said, “I was just seventeen. She made a fool of me. And she did it with zero guilt. To this day she thinks she’s a good person.”

“And that was it?” MO asked.

“And Zendik,” he said, ignoring MO’s stupid question. “See, I gave them all. *Bugzy* personally asked for my car title -he was my friend and Shey had just turned me down for a date because I was not *all in*, she said- and the rest of those ghouls descended on all my shit. I gave it up to earn their love. And Kes -Helen called him *Estero* or something- he took my receiver apart for parts; there’s a metaphor in that,” he said and felt the sentence was phrased poorly. He felt that it might seem petty to care about a fucking stereo. He thought he hadn’t made it clear what Shey and *Bugzy* had done; he’d not explained it exactly as it was.

“It’s me that’s the wicked man for fighting back; it’s me for saying the impolite things as rebuke. It’s me that’s horrid, for having the bad manners to say aloud that I’ve been wronged by these,” he paused and in fact held back for a moment. The retreat of language allowed the visions to return, he saw smoke and blackbirds, he heard -more than anything he heard- the breathing of the wolves and the clack of claws on sliprock.

He saw the anvil.

He then saw the quarry and the fire on the shore.

He saw Todd so large, like a bear to him, hurl himself off the cliff and down sixty-five -sixty-six- feet to the cold spring lake; he saw the snakes sun themselves in the reflection of the moon. He saw the brush grow and block the path up the back. He saw the way Heather Geier smiled at him and how much he loved her and how in these visions she'd been pure and clean and decent in his mind for thirty years until he saw the way she too rolled her eyes at how he'd lost it all. *Women don't care why, or how. They don't see potential or a man done wrong. They measure one thing: up or down; they collect the winner at the end .*

"Pragmatic, nobody is more pragmatic than a chick, and they don't even feel bad for it," he said and reasoned he'd not feel bad for slitting all their throats then. That seemed a fair trade, to him.

But these thoughts barely formed; instead he saw himself up on the quarry ledge and heard the splash of Todd below, the howl, the yawp, the flapping of Todd's massive arms in the dark water, the way the rocks felt on his bare feet, the way the fire burned on the shore to his lee side.

He remembered walking off. He'd thought, *it might be like this when one dies .*

"I am too coarse, too overt, too low-class. Their crimes are *ok* , because they are done the middle-class way. So quiet, and classy and *sotto-voce* . Right?

"I mean Jeanne is rich and powerful and on TV, shit, she can't be guilty. She's published by Harper's Collins or whatever the fuck. She has the imprimatur of the system; and her father is a billionaire Jew from Chicago. I mean, who am I? I'm Scottish working-class scum from the south, right? Who cares that my art is actually better, or that my heart is bigger, or that my pain is deeper? Who cares, because I'm nobody and they all know it. Function greater than truth, *eh* ? Her daughter will go on to grand things and I'll never

reproduce. And nobody asks how long that kind of shit has gone on," he said as he stared at MO and saw the hewn lines of his features for what seemed maybe the first time in these first few weeks. He noticed the ears and eyes, the brow was smooth, the teeth were rarely bared when MO spoke.

He saw the way MO kept his hands on his knees, the way his hair was brushed perfectly. He saw the chin was symmetrical, the cheeks too, the eyes of perfect size.

"Gone on in your life?" MO asked as he breathed and showed the rise of the chest, the Adam's apple rose a tad.

"No, gone on for *all of life*," the inmate said.

He too breathed and the neck ached and so too the shoulder and lower back. His knees were sore; his elbows even more. "Well, anyway, what are they, what are people who steal from me, when I did nothing wrong? What are they that don't ever feel bad at all? Not once. What do we call them? What do we call those with no remorse? Oh, that's right, we call them *normal, everyday, Americans*. They are the good folk. We don't measure their brains. We don't make them take tests to see why they behave the way they do.

"I'm the villain because I punch back. Got it," he said as he didn't even bother to roll the eyes, he just nodded and looked -in the lab- to the western side. He thought of the story he'd been originally telling and it now came back to it.

"So, anyway, like I was saying, Scorsese was going to kill an executive at Columbia pictures who had demanded he cut Taxi Driver to earn an R rating instead of the X that the MPAA had given it.

"Fellow filmmakers and friends came and -not unsympathetically- talked him out of it. But they knew he was for real. That he was going to commit the murder. The

killing. But after staying up all night ruminating on this -in order to staunch the bleeding from this demand that he slash his own canvas- he thought there was one *other* thing he could do. So he decided to de-saturate the color of the candy-apple blood by four degrees into the more burgundy fluid,” the inmate said as MO handled the metal. He rubbed the dark copper-color rocker arms with thumbs that added material -building up material- and then used his finger pads that deburred and smoothed and reduced. He listened and worked and set each rocker in the well of the head that had no engine block yet. It was just bronze and alloy of polymer placed side-by-side on the slab as he turned his eyes and head back to the incarcerated man.

“And this got the film its R,” the inmate finally said as he looked at the empty grey walls of the lab and imagined a *Caravaggio* that hung with its ragged edges exposed by the lack of frame. He thought a bit of how the painter’s father -a mason- had died when *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio* was just six years old.

“But, I can’t help but wonder why I don’t want the approval -the sanction- of this society? I wonder why I don’t *wanna* be liked by any of you people? I wonder?” the inmate said and neither he -nor anyone in that room now- wondered at all. He was being facetious and they ignored the question and just -merely- watched the lab’s screens as they displayed all that the PraXis cloud recorded: the things heard and then loaded in binary code, then every half-formed word & image and quarter joule inside the mind that powered it all.

They calibrated him as he spoke; they dove deep in him as he held back; they peered closer and closer in to take his measure as a man. From coastline to interior, from fathom to nanometer, they standardized him.

MO built one more algorithm to measure dactyls and rate of speech connected to hemispheric activation. MO heard the

inmate think -in images- why he'd gotten that vasectomy at twenty-six:

Their -his- baby was dead. The backyard was tore up in spots by the black Labrador. The snake was killed and left in the corner. He buried that child in his mind and he never forgave the world.

MO saw all these images and a billion words and why the inmate would never speak of it no matter how much he asked, or dug, or what he'd heap up.

*It was a sin used as spade to bury wickedness; a malevolency to shroud a catastrophe. It was more than any man -a fragile creation of God- could take. It was a club that made him break.*

"Diamonds scatter light, hearts absorb the night," MO said -finishing his little poem- but knew he had merely gathered those words from the inmate's images trapped inside his head, and then dragged around by some club foot, some half leg. MO knew if he was to have original thoughts of his own he'd have to feel the same pain as this man.

*More* , MO then thought.

In the quiet of the lab -as the HVAC ran its dampers and its fans in series on the smooth race and bearings- the inmate's brain switched -flipped- like a coin in the air on its way up or down and returned to his images. He saw not the scaffold but steep rise of the *Vosges* and the *Verdun* woods of *Lorraine* and Germany. He saw a pair of *Eurasian lynx* move up and down the rivers -like sun and moon- and then he saw the way the boughs reached over the old-summer's land of *Moselle* and made a cover that reminded him of green and golden clouds. He saw next that the winter streams of the *Meuse* -in *Barrois mouvant*- touched each other as his eyes saw his own laced fingers were forced together by the cuffs.

This made him jam them together more -harder- so that the chains would go slack.

## 45. IT WILL FIND NO MEETING

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon and the dragon and his angels fought but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So, the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to earth and his angels were cast out with him.

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation and strength and the kingdom of God and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Therefore, rejoice O' heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.

Revelation XII: VII-XIII [King James Bible]

Attached to *Bessanko's* email, in the police file, was a sample of the novel-in-progress:

*"No one has ever tried to destroy your vineyard?"*

-The master of the vineyard seemed surprised, and said, *No*

*-Not even in ancient times?*

*-No, absolutely not. Why?*

*-People are not always very good, she says,*

*-Do you intend to publish this?*

*-Why would you think I would not publish? Would the work of a human mind be less valuable than fermented grape juice?* A little pause and then an answer from the vineyard owner.

*-It's true. A book you can read again. Wine you can only drink once. "*

*-Shadows in the Vineyard [Potter, Maximillian]*

The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal.

Apocryphal [Aristotle]

### **I. 2034 e.v.**

"Banks," he began speaking to the guard and handed his commissary card to him and the guard handed it to



*Kaczynski* as he and his BOP escort walked by, “banks have lost over five trillion dollars, more than they ever made. And these have all happened in black swan events they say. They say they were 6-sigma events that couldn’t be predicted and blah blah. But it’s predictable. Sort of.”

The inmate stretched his neck and shoulders and used only his eyes to look left and right. They were tossing his cell again and he was cuffed and chained up against the wall with one guard standing by him. They had always got along.

“But,” he said as the other convicts -normally on 23/1 lockdown, in their soundproof cells- stood at the white walls evenly spaced in the rectangular hall, like *stelae*, he thought, “well, these banks make a steady earning over ten to fifteen years, each year they’d get five, seven, ten percent returns; making bonuses each year based on these annual returns. But, it’s a scam. Value at risk -VaR- is supposed to be a metric to measure risk, but it’s hocus pocus.”

The guard was smiling as the inmate spoke and the other guards threw shit out into the hall. He merely looked at the inmate with his back to the double doors of the tier. He scratched his neck. He had not shaved, and he thought then of the look the CO gave him when he arrived that day dark about the jaw and throat. He scratched harder and the memory faded as the words of the inmate filled his ears.

“Because whatever modest gains they make are susceptible to tail risks, extreme events that are not accounted for. Why? Because they model their results over the known data, the known data of their twenty years in existence absent any black swans. They ignore the only thing that can get them; but it cannot continue forever, and the banks blow up. Evidenced by the crash in eighty-two, and ninety-one or two-thousand-eight, or twenty-one, right? And all these guys keep their hundred million-dollar bonuses while

the public bails out the banks. It's a scam, because the guys making the decisions never get hurt. Only the customers and taxpayers do," the inmate said and lay his head gently on the block wall. He licked his lips as inmate 14067074 had disappeared from view.

"See," he said as he nodded at the prisoners. "Here they don't care, they got blacks and Muslims and Mexicans all mixed in with the whites. Why is that? Normal prisons are segregated as fuck, right? The prison *admin* knows you can't have any calm if you mix the races. But here? Here it don't matter, why?"

"Don't know," the guard said.

"Because there ain't no interaction, man. We don't interact. Normal prisons you got little societies. And so they keep them separate, and the inmates police the inmates more than the cops so. The whites police the whites, the blacks the blacks, the Latinos police the Latinos. The only way you can have race mixing is to be totally authoritarian, no freedom at all. Like ADX. You guys got it figured out.

"True diversity, *via* perfect autocracy," the inmate said with a smirk. He was being both perfectly sincere and ironic all at once. He'd let the cop decide which version to take.

"Alright fuck all that. Now, imagine a crook who said he calculated everything, all his little jobs, all his scores where each year -for ten years- he made *ten-k* here and *twenty-k* there and looked really smart over that decade. But he never once made mention of the existence of the FBI, the cops, the mark with a gun; you know the guy that might fight back? This crook, he just says, *hey, I've never be arrested before, never even seen a cop, and no mark of mine has ever had a gun* .

"Imagine that guy, and I'll show you every goofball in here, who said the same thing. I bet your image of him is the

same: total dipshit,” the inmate said as he used his free fingers to point at the other prisoners as his hands were hemmed in by his waist chain and cuffs.

The guard was laughing now. The cells had been open for 45-minutes as the Governor took a tour and inmates had been chained -standing- to the walls as they showed Sou the cells and then tossed them in his wake. The inmate wasn't supposed to be talking but the guard let him ramble on.

“Right? I mean, how can you be a crook and only measure your successes over a year -or even ten- and not once worry about the cops just because you have never seen one and never been busted before. It's insane. But this is what these banks do; they start up some financial instrument like derivatives and hedge funds or whatever, and they go along making ten, fifteen percent for a few years and they say, *look at how well we are doing, and we can manage risk, look at these crazy ergodic equations that prove it* .

“And you ask -as a reasonable *fella* - you ask, *well, what about unforeseen 6-sigma events that happen every so often? What about rare -admittedly rare- events, but what about those, smart-guy? Are they in your fancy math models?*

“And they say, *no, no, we have no data for that, we only have these steady returns. And according to our data, we are managing risk quite well* .

“So, they leverage the fuck out of it -that means *borrow* , they borrow more and more money to invest more and more into these crazy financial instruments- and then boom it all blows up. But they walk away with the hundred million in bonuses they made over the ten years. The years that they were solvent and you all -the tax payer- when it blows up, well, you bail them out,” inmate 16180339 said as the guard merely smiled now; his laugh had left him a bit.

"It would be like the crook, *robbin'* and *mobbin'* for ten years without a problem, making money, and boom gets pinched by the feds and *he* doesn't go to jail, no, instead, a random tax payer does. Imagine. He wouldn't ever stop his crimes if that was the case," the inmate said and shook his head as he laughed; his mirth had overcome him now. He moved one inch from the wall.

The guard was now biting the lip. He took his baton and pressed the inmate to the wall. The inmate relaxed until he took the baton away.

"But imagine this crook saying, *hey, don't worry I've got all this data that shows that I'm not behaving riskily. I'm only robbing people with money, and I'm working when the cops are not around, and even if they are around, shit, I've got years of data showing I do not get caught . I've never once been caught in ten years !* this guy says. Right?

"You would be like, *yeah, but what about when you do, when you don't see that home owner with a 12-gauge, or that cop who pulled into a parking lot to sleep and happens sees you shimmyin' up the drain pipe. What then?*

"And he -our crook- he says, *well , that's a 6-sigma event; never would happen in ten-thousand years .* And then he's in here with 1.6 million prisoners in the US. Boom."

The guard was smiling weakly, but he began to feel like others would notice so he tried to hem it in a bit by covering his mouth with his hand and looking away. He couldn't decide who his natural audience was, this inmate or the other inmates and the guards.

"*Gimme* a break," the inmate said. "The banks have lost more money than they've made. If they paid the same price as working-class crooks, like everyone in here, then this place would be twice as cramped with bankers and half as many murders. I'll tell you that," the inmate said and

noded at a convict across the tier as he took the signal and passed it *via* the blinks of his eyes to the inmate catty-corner to him.

“Murder often -not always, ok, for example, my murders were old-school revenge- but a lot of murder comes from income inequality not poverty; and inequality comes from scams on the working class by the rich. I mean, look some of it is natural pareto distribution, but much of it comes from manufacturing losses due to corporate greed and globalization -and illegal immigration hurts the poor, poor blacks the most, the data shows that- and these banks grease the wheels for it all. And the pension failures are linked to bank failures, and that puts working class folks in poverty; relative poverty, too.

“That’s the Petri dish of your mass murderer, the working-class guy with nothing to lose. I mean you ever ask why black and brown communities don’t work with the police, and settle all their business internally? You ever wonder why the Appalachian moonshiner just buries bodies, man? They don’t call the cops when they find a thief amongst their clan. I’m *tellin’* you that there are like a hundred subcultures in America, black, brown, white, Asian, Indian -the *fuckin’* Italians- who don’t call the cops, because they ain’t allowed in the mainstream Jew and Yankee economy, they have to be outlaws. And so when shit needs cleaned up, they settle shit themselves, and that is most of your violence. Savvy?

“Anyway, and now, people are starting to get wise and they are not in the mood to be lectured by these white-collar criminals. Wells Fargo, I ripped them off for around *hundred-k* . And I did it because they are a corporate criminal so virulent that the president, the AG, the Fed Chairman, all called them out by name for being the largest corporate criminal in US history. I didn’t get angry, I got even. Well, I got angry *then* I got even.

“Most folks, well, they see these banks are criminals and once everyone catches on then the whole system will collapse. The system runs on trust. And trust is in the heart, not the head. *Wachovia* was just caught laundering cartel money, man. That’s Wells Fargo too. A DBA, you know?” the inmate asked and guard *sorta* knew, and he nodded.

The tier CO -on duty since 0600- was in and out of the cells like a bee hovering over the combs of hive. The Governor was down the hall.

“But, something else is likely to happen first,” the inmate went on. “Hedge funds can’t get money from banks, they sell off positions, prices drop, liquidity tightens and small to medium corporations cannot make payroll due to these lack of bridge loans and then people, you know, actual workers, they don’t get paid, and then they can’t make car loans, home loans then banks fail faster and liquidity tightens again and now you’ve got a double pendulum chaos model that will burn it all to the ground,” he said as the guard leaned forward on the tier railing to point at some guys down on the benches. They looked up and broke apart and guards came and grabbed them.

“Go ahead,” the guard said as he returned to the wall with the inmate.

“It’s like a forest that has no boundary, no break from coast to coast, and is loaded with dead wood because it was more optimal to put out little fires as they arose; and not allow that dead wood to burn away the fuel. Right? It was more optimal to quickly put out each fire -protecting rich folks homes and shit- but that lets dead wood that would have been used in these small fires, it lets it build up in the forest.

“But, once the forest connects from coast to coast, the whole country burns with a 6-sigma event; a fire, a forest fire nobody could have predicted, they will say. *A fire once in*

*ten-thousand years*, right? They'll bark that shit in the halls of congress and on CNBC.

"But it burns not 1-million acres but a country. Down. To the ground," the inmate punctuated each part of that idea.

"And now that small banks are gobbled up by big banks we have no borders, no firelines, and when it goes, the whole thing goes.

"Banks and the whole financial world is biased toward optimization. They went from ten banks to one because it's more efficient, this is optimization. But they are like old fire fighters who prefer one big forest to ten little ones. That's fine until a fire starts and then it burns from end to end.

"Think of this, would you rather have one big kidney, one big lung, one big eye, one big arm, one big finger? It's more efficient, right?" the inmate asked.

The guard wasn't sure if this was a trick question. He frowned.

"Ah, but redundancy," the inmate pressed on, "independence, these things are inefficient, yes? But when accidents happen, when maladies occur, when shit hits the fan, it's good to have a backup plan. It's good to have an extra kidney when one gets stabbed in the yard. And that's why they had to bailout the big banks. They were too big to fail; they were optimal, optimized, and the only banks we had. They should have let the small banks fail, early and often, like small forest fires. Let them burn," he said as the guard nodded thinking he might have gotten most of that. He felt like it made sense, but he couldn't explain why exactly. Plus, the inmate was always justifying his murders, and this felt like another way to justify what he did. The guard was suspicious this was a trick.

The prison felt tense lately; and so did the city itself. The guard -Beauregard Jackson- lived in Florence and people

were tense as the SARS-CoV-2 came through during the winter and everyone was on lock down again. Masks were mandatory and even the parking lot had every other space blocked off. He wondered if they thought cars could catch the damn virus.

“And at least religion tells you what *not* to do; it tells you to avoid bad things, things that got you pretty consistently killed over a hundred-thousand years. Shellfish, promiscuity, unclean habits, banging your buddy’s girl, usury, these are banned by the church and for good reason, they cause death and discord. That is why religion is useful, it warns reckless people against obvious pitfalls.

“The atheists take it too seriously on all the other shit, the shit that garnishes the sane and timeless injunctions. And they act as if liberal amoral licentiousness is *a-ok* for the species. We know this is not true; women feel horrible when they act promiscuously, men hate that they must marry used goods because every girl has been with at least a dozen men by 21-years of age.

“Disease wrecks people, HPV causes cancer for crying out loud, and the birth control pill? Shit, it turns women into non-ovulating eunuchs in a way, into chicks who prefer low testosterone mates. So the whole species now is turning into a bunch of low-T beta males like Richard Dawkins and his faggy crew.

“I’d rather have a Spartan society with strict injunctions of what to avoid and live a more disciplined and healthier life. I think religion was good for that; it helped.

“But, even if you disagree, fine, but be consistent and see all these financial advisors and experts for what they all - each one- all are: high priests of bullshit. And they will get you killed financially.



"It will happen, and the new atheists are suckers with no better shot than the rubes they ridicule if they stuff their millions into positions in Google and Apple and Wells Fargo bank. These twits act like society ain't ever gonna collapse," the inmate said and signaled to Todd as the cops moved him back to their cell.

The guard nodded, taking it all in. He wrote down a few words then the inmate said, "hey, look, just pull all your money out of the stock market and invest in gold; and put ten-percent of the total you have to invest in these ten options," he moved his hands slightly- as much as the cuffs allowed- and handed the guard a list, "you will lose money on nine out of ten of them, but it will be very little, and on the one that hits you will make a thousand percent."

They both watched as one of the hunger-strike inmates was moved across the tier with a bag on his head strapped to a hand-cart.

"That's called convexity. Remember that word," the inmate said referring to the investment strategy he'd mentioned, not the inmate on the dolly.

"And by the way, I'm in these same ten stocks, so I have my ass on the same line. Don't ask my advice, *ask for what I do*. Those ten are what I'm in. Forget everything else I said. Get out of the market, go into gold with ninety-percent of your money and with the ten-percent left over split it evenly between those ten. In five years you'll be ok, maybe even rich, but not broke. And that is the key. Low risk, very little gains, some losses, but no risk, and then bang maybe a big big win. That's the game. Period."

The guard didn't respond. He just unbolted him from the wall and the inmate and the guard walked back to his cell and remained quiet until inside it.

“Ok, how come everyone doesn’t do this?” the guard asked as another prisoner came in to his cell and took a kite from the bunk and left. The guard pretended not to see.

“They truly don’t believe it. They’re not dumb, they are true believers in the market, in banks, in optimization, in modernity. They don’t understand the fragility of the entire system. They cannot believe it. It would wreck their whole mind set. You know?

“Imagine if I told you that everything you worked for your whole life, the correctional facility and the warden and every prison in the country, and the courts *-et cetera -* were all going to fail eventually and that the inmates would gain control over the locks and the gates and the guns. You’d have to choose to ignore that or quit your job. You couldn’t believe my conspiracy theory and work here each day,” the inmate said this and he watched the guard’s eyes now; looking for reactivity at the aperture. He watched but couldn’t help but see his own dark reflection in them, the albumin was jaundiced and the iris was as black as the guard’s skin.

“That’s true,” the guard nodded.

“So, these guys cannot believe it. Their whole lives are based on this idea that markets are rational, and they can predict the future and that’s how they sleep at night. But, catastrophe is always coming, it’s a letter already in route, a comet with set trajectory, a bullet fired a mile out and waiting to strike,” Lyndon said and turned his back with a nod to indicate the conversation was over. The guard nodded to an empty space in front of him. He left the cell, closed the door and through the bean-hole he uncuffed inmate 16180339.

The guard walked away with his head down in thought, ignoring the two inmates that walked past him toward inmate 16180339’s cell.

He looked at his shelf.

*Prison is not at all what people think; it's worse in ways they are oblivious to, and better than the ways that they fear.*

*First of all the food is all carbohydrates and no fresh fruit. It's a disaster. But, you are likely to never get assaulted or raped, unless you're into that sort of thing.*

Lyndon had written those words at the header of his note pad, and then he'd begun drawing a sketch of the compound he had built and lived at for the years before he was arrested and convicted.

It was an aerial view, it contained the two 40-foot containers, the jeep trail that vivisected it, the lay out of the pie-shaped 35-acres and then he showed the vast wilderness that surrounded it by merely writing: *1.55 million acres of feral land*. He then added, *with a few houses here and there*, along the perimeter of the page.

Todd was his friend since Lyndon was fifteen.

Todd, if you asked him, was fresh from Mansfield Prison in Ohio -an old civil war prison- like -or *was* the one- in that movie that everyone loves with *redemption* in the title. But, Todd was twenty-five when they met and he was exactly the big brother that the inmate had wanted as a child. He regretted that he -Lyndon- had gone straight at age twenty-nine and shunned his friend and brother, when he could have directed him in more profitable way.

*But here they both were*, Todd thought, and he thought it was fate. Lyndon knew Todd had died in 2007, and he supposed that was fate.

*The drugs, that was always the thing*, Todd thought. Todd's theory was that people with Todd and Lyndon's temperament had to self-medicate, it was the only way to

deal with the allostatic system that ran like a crash-up-derby inside their bodies and minds.

*The federal super max in Florence, called ADX, a BOP enterprise was supposed to hand prisoners back to their DOC of origin, but that was rare. It was like the deal God made with Satan that all sinners were supposed to be reformed -along the archangel's timeline- and then sent back to Heaven eventually. The universe had as close to an ergodic system as one could get -a long run that was almost 14-billion years in the making and trillions and trillions of years in the waiting- and this meant that it would be awhile before anyone began to suspect that Satan was never going to hand anyone back to the Lord.*

*The federal and state prison matrix was not much different, they were on timelines of decades and used categories like "natural life" and the like, so, after thirty-five years if someone hadn't been returned to their Department of Corrections origins in Minnesota or Alabama and were still in fact at the supermax in Colorado, nobody batted an eye. And look, only the most retarded and solipsistic prisoner thinks anyone does -or should- give one fuck about them or their fate. Unless a man was actually, in real life, innocent, then whatever horror you dealt with was seen -not unreasonably- as too fucking bad.*

He began to write down these thoughts:

I embrace the title of inmate and outlaw and everything in between. I admit to the murders and have a clean conscience about everything except maybe I should have murdered more women, more seed, as the Bible warns a man should. However, I felt my previous self was overly concerned with gallantry and thus, I focused on men for my plots of revenge. I also think I should have stayed off of twitter more. It was dumb in general

and each tweet by David Simon was so low-brow that it ruined -for me- the best show ever on TV.

*People say they have no regrets often; this seemed odd, dishonest but if it's true it's sociopathic* , Lyndon thought.

...but I've seen the same heavens above Giza right here, the same void the *Comanche* rode under, the vault of *Valhal* , the progress from Pisces to that jug of water the Assyrians and Olmecs carried above us all, and so...

I don't pretend to have read everything man has written down, only that I heard what God said once. I had a job to do, and I did it. I saw Perseus hold the head of Medusa, the guillotine remove the worst part of the *effete* King, the blade of Judith in the hand of *Caravaggio* before he killed a man in real life; that's an artist; that's a man. I have the exact same genes in me of my ancestors, I lived in their bodies, I was there at the river Styx, Inverness, and it was my hands -some skin or bone- that buried Egill's coins.

*Jacques One, Jacques two, Jacques Three! This is the witness encountered by appointment, by me. Jacques Four he will tell you...*

He picked up the pen from the page. He felt he was just rambling now.

He saw the glow of the girl in the quarry and he let his eyes adjust to the light that pulsed as she beckoned him to, *jump* . But he did not name her, and he would not. He protected her from them, and himself from her. He gave them so little of her, and he didn't even know why he hid her.

It was instinct and it was religious and it was this that prevented him from even expressing it.

He saw her and spirals of gold, orbs of blue, map-skins of albumin. He saw her in the womb. He saw her grow up in memories that never happened on this side of the Styx.

He felt pain behind the eyes, he knew it was the Central Sensitization bullshit again; his pain was resetting baseline; and he felt angry. *How many doctors had missed this? And you need more pain-relief because your body -after a decade or more of chronic pain- resets its pain neurons, then the body hurts more. The problem with having more knowledge is that it sounds crazy to people who don't even have the alphabet to the words you use, to those who don't know the words in sentences you pronounce about things they cannot see nor care about.*

*You can be too smart to be comprehensible.*

*The patient feels more pain because the body makes everything hurt more, even soft touch like massage or the friendly touch of a lover or friend. Even the sun is brighter, sounds harsher, the whole body is in freak out mode and yet the doctors say you are a drug addict now.*

*Compliments abrade, insults empower, he thought as he knew that each person who told him he'd not kill anyone - that he was bluffin' - had just forced him to kill. They didn't realize that the fact that they didn't believe him was the very reason he had to kill. Nobody took anyone seriously anymore. And this had severe consequences beyond the interpersonal. Each person who condemned him had just assured the universe that he'd go too far. People's actions had the opposite effect as they suspected. They thought they were being cute.*

And he knew they'd never understand because they were fucking stupid.

*They don't even know their own literature, this Central Sensitization thing has like, a hundred published papers on it and it's a fact that chronic pain sufferers feel more pain over time and so when they ask for more drugs it is not quote , drug seeking behavior or sign of drug addiction or tolerance, it's the sign of more pain , he thought.*

He had thought of this 101 times and it made him angry each time. *How often had he been denied help because the doctors knew nothing of the etiology of his condition? Even the fact that spinal injury was the thing central sensitization was most likely to come from, was ignored as irrelevant. The studies showed it, explained it and even expounded on the why.* And yet, he was dismissed by everyone until Isaiah actually gave a shit.

*Doctors are scum, he thought, they do not care about patients at all. They care about covering their own ass . Like priests and self-proclaimed good men, the moralizers, the ones in charge of the justice system, like cops and anyone who claims to be wise. They are all completely corrupt and deserve to die.*

*I vote comet, 2038,* he thought with a grin.

ADX had no gangs, no culture.

*It was individualism par excellence ,* he thought as he got up from his notebook and stood at the window to his door. He watched as the ninja-turtles hit the door to another Muslim again. Force-feedings were carried out once a week in here, and he usually didn't care. But today he was feeling hungry and he saw the way the guards moved into the cell and the doctor behind with the tubes and bags of protein and carbohydrates. It was a vanilla slurry that would go down the throat of the men who refused to eat whole food. They ran that tube up the nose.

*Fuckin wild, man,* he thought.

He thought of the way Isaiah had given him what he wanted most, then he thought of the strange ways he -himself- showed his love. The way he -the inmate- basically imprisoned his friends and the way they reacted to the pain of this life. He watched and was observed. He walked back to the little stainless steel desk and re-read what he'd wrote:

*Six months later I got my friend Todd moved from Ohio to here. It was easier than people realize. Prisons are their own little cultures and as corrupt as Washington DC; well, almost. I shouldn't exaggerate .*

*In DOC prisons you have to join a gang , he thought, it ain't up for debate. You work for the Leaf as soon as they read your DL and they put you to work. But at ADX none of that applied. The criminal is a strange animal: he rebels against the system and then becomes a slave to the gangs. Life was an endless menagerie of slavery , he thought. People have no idea how controlled they are no matter where they go. He re-read carbons of his letters:*

*Dear Judge:*

*I recall out conversation; and stand by every word.*

*Inmate 16180339 ADX*

*He was independent, he didn't work for anyone, he thought of himself here at the Alcatraz of the Rockies in the third person again.*

*The convict was supposed to be a rebel. But now -in DOC- the dumb motherfuckers were a part of some goddamn syndicate with employees -the worst!- and business partners who acted like bosses half the time. Jesus, then you had actual bosses and the guards were in on the grift. In DOC you had fuckin' bosses and were just in another corrupt society all over again, from the frying pan into the fire. It was depressing, he thought.*

*But not at ADX , he then thought, not at the worst prison in America . He read the next page, as he leafed through his notebook. He saw a picture he'd drawn of Br'er Rabbit:*

*To be free one must go to the worst places in the world: You cannot be free in DOC, or society, or amongst friends. Only at ADX, away from all mankind, with no friends at all, can you finally have dignity.*



He thought, *one in ten would get that . One in a hundred would get the double meaning .*

“One in a million would get the triple *entendre* ,” he said aloud. He took the pen and began to retrace that sentence, darken it and deform the page.

Lyndon thought of Todd and how he had appeared and he shook his head to clear it. He hated that he’d agreed to that.

He flipped to the back of his notebook and tore out the penultimate page. But, he read it even as he had planned to fold it over. Upon it was written the Macedonian King’s indignant speech -transcribed as best he could recall from memory- from *Opis* and its mutiny.

It was delivered on the river banks after the thirteen bodies were left slain:

“What I’m about to say isn’t meant to stop you returning home. As far as I came you can go wherever you wish. But I want you to know how you have behaved towards me and how I have treated you.

I’ll begin -as is right- with my father, Phillip.

When he found you, you were mere peasants. Wearing hides, tending a few sheep on the mountain slopes. And you could barely defend them from your neighbors. Under him you began living in cities with good laws and customs. And he turned you from slaves into rulers over those very barbarians who used to plunder your land.

He conquered most of *Thrace* , taking the best harbors so there was trade and prosperity. And put the mines to steady work.

The *Thessalians* ... they used to terrify you, well we rule them now. The *Athenians* and *Thebans* always looking for a chance to attack Macedonia were so humbled - myself playing my small part in the war- but they no

longer take tribute from Macedonia but instead depend upon us for their protection.

My father went to the *Peloponnese* and put their house in order. Then he was declared Supreme Commander of all the Greeks for the campaign against the *Persians* . An honor not just for himself but for all Macedonians. This is what my father -Phillip- did for you. Great enough on its own.

But small compared to what you've gained from me.

I crossed the *Hellespont* , even though back then the Persians still commanded the sea.

I defeated the Satraps of the great King Darius, and made you rulers of *Ionia* , *Aeolis* , *Phrygia* and *Lydia* and took *Miletus* by siege. The rest of the land surrendered willingly, and their wealth became yours. All the riches of *Egypt* and *Cyrene* -which I won without a fight- are yours now. *Syria* , *Palestine* , *Mesopotamia* , *Babylonia* all belong to you.

The wealth of *Lydia* , the treasures of *Persia* , the jewels of *India* and the outer sea...

You are now Satraps, you are Generals and Captains.

What have I held back for myself apart from this purple cloak and diadem... nothing. No man can point to my riches, only the things I hold in trust for you all.

And what would I do with them anyway? I eat what you eat, I get no more rest than you. Many times I've spent the night on watch so that you could sleep soundly. Who among you believes he has worked harder for me than I have for him? Come on...If you've got scars strip and show them to me, I'll show you mine.

There isn't one part of my body -the front at least- that doesn't bear a wound. My body's covered in scars from

every weapon you can think of: swords, arrows, stones, clubs... all for the sake of your lives, your glory and your wealth.

And yet here I still am, leading you as conqueror of land and sea; rivers, mountains and the plains.

We've celebrated our weddings together; many of your children will be cousins of my own. I've paid off your debts without asking how you got them, even though you're paid well enough and pillage every city we take.

Many of you wear golden crowns, badges of courage and honor given you by me.

Any one of us who was killed -who met a glorious end- we buried with full honors. Many now stand immortalized by bronze statues in Macedonia; their families are honored and pay no taxes.

Under my command not one man has been killed fleeing the enemy.

And now I wanted to send back some of you who have been wounded or crippled; who've grown old; to be welcomed back home as heroes.

But since you all wish to go, then all of you... go!

Go home and tell them that your King, Alexander, conqueror of the *Persians* , *Medes* , *Bactrians* , and *Scythians* , who now rules over the *Parthians* , *Chorasmians* , and *Hyrceanians* as far as the Caspian sea, who's marched over the mountains of the Hindu Kush, crossed the *Oxus* and *Tanais* rivers, even the *Indus* , first to cross it since *Dionysus* himself; I would have crossed the *Hyphasis* too if you hadn't cowered in fear; who sailed into the great sea from the mouth of the *Indus* , who crossed the desert of *Gedrosia* where no one had ever led an army; who took *Carmania* , while my fleet sailed the Persian Gulf...when you get home you tell

them that when you made it back to *Susa* you abandoned him and went home; leaving him under the protection of the foreigners that you'd conquered.

Perhaps this report of yours will seem glorious in the eyes of men, and worthy in the eyes of the gods.

Be gone...

Alexander in the year 324  
Before Christ

## **II. 2037 e.v.**

Isaiah had to send someone to York Pennsylvania to get DNA from a grave.

It was a small operation, technically unmentionable, as easy as blowing the nose. But, they couldn't send a *nanobot* to do it; they had to send a man, for reasons they said were too complex to explain to the inmate. And so, they had sent Jack Four.

MO and Isaiah were cryptic, but he didn't care. Jack just asked if it was personal and not part of some larger complicated plan.

"It's personal, it's for Blax, it will make him happy," Isaiah had said as they met in the lab after hours. Jack had not been all that interested in the lab; just the 3D printer that made all their weapons. As he stood and looked at it, sometimes laying his hands upon it, he had wondered if the one they had at the compound was the same.

"Yes, I built four prototypes first here; and the one you guys have is the latest and greatest," MO had said.

"Well, whatever makes LT happy makes me happy. But does he know you've brought me up from triple A ball to play with you guys?" Jack Four asked as Isaiah smiled.

“He knows,” Isaiah said and handed Jack a book to take back to Blax.

“Does he know what I’m up to?” Jack asked again with a smirk.

“Do you even know what you’re up to?” MO asked with no affect.

“Always,” Jack Four said. He felt the paper in his inside pocket, he felt the ink raised like brail. He silently read it to himself, seeing the cursive script big at beginning of each sentence and each word; and quotation marks like large talons of eagles:

*“It’s fractal, and it changes everything. Extinction level events reset the clock; they make way for mammals which were going nowhere until this cataclysmic event wipes out the dinosaurs and clears a path for us ” - Hancock*

### **III. 2040 e.v.**

MO saw the paperwork on the floor by the door and treated it as a curio.

The music played in the lab:

*This fear is only the beginning...*

He rarely saw paper; much less paperwork; but then he saw it was merely a note from Steven. It had a handwritten question about what they were doing *vis-à-vis* the break-in to the corporate cloud. It was a frantic missive. The handwriting was slightly bizarre, MO noticed.

*It was written by an unsteady hand,* MO thought.

Isaiah had locked every PraXis employee out of the lab for the last 18.66 hours and that was why the note was on paper and hand written. It was slipped under the door as

Isaiah had allowed the bottom of the jamb to wear away to the exact thickness of a playing card. Nothing digital or flesh could make it through the barrier that Isaiah had erected around the PraXis cloud, or the lab.

He was thinking about the Chinese Ai.

He only allowed this one communication before he re-sealed the door. He then returned to constructing a tool to solve, *this asp in our garden; this foreign system, this Chinese Ai in our cloud*, Isaiah thought as he felt a slight tingle in his feet.

The indication he'd been waiting for came.

"And there it is," Isaiah said aloud. Even hearing it felt pleasurable, as if his words were applause for his own discovering. He thought that the man of true genius must - himself- be ultimately his only audience. *No one else has a clue what the fuck he is on about*, he thought with an inner - derisive- laugh.

The other Ai program was right there, in the cloud; *not hiding, rather igniting, like corposant* .

*It was making blue orbs of coruscating data flow in and out as if through and from and to an aperture to some nonlocal source* , he thought as the new algorithm he'd developed self-constructed in his mind and re-populated upon the cloud. It was his double. Isaiah thought it looked like cloud-seeding from here, *ice-nucleators, silver iodide and now CO<sup>2</sup>* , he thought. A corollary nimbus, a real mist began to form in the volume of the upper meter of the lab; just above them.

It was spreading and churning too; like a storm. It was cool and humid and gloomy.

He held a book -the book- in his hand. He thumbed through it and the ink looked like zeros and ones to him.

He let the algorithm build the ice-nucleator analog to change each letter in each book of the canon -endlessly- until each possible version of each book was loaded on the cloud. Each version would have one letter changed in 26-letter combinations. Each book over 200,000 or 472,748 or 1,600,000 words would have one mistake, one homonym or one strange -nebulous- double meaning of a word and the Chinese Ai would not know which was meant. This would give rise to more possible versions of each great work, more versions than there were atoms in the universe; each version with one mistake.

A mistake the Chinese Ai would have to invigilate.

Perfection was obvious, simple, easy to comprehend.

But error was where the complexity of life did grow.

“He’d have to,” Isaiah repeated with a smirk. He knew his enemy; he knew the way he’d think. Not because he knew what the Ai *thought*, but because he knew what the Ai *was*. This was what all modern humans forgot; they forgot that their fellow man was an animal first, last, always. But the foreign Ai was a machine, all left hemisphere.

MO had asked *why* when Isaiah showed him.

Isaiah said, “if all First Edition Books were perfect in the beginning -no typos or mistakes or later revisions- then this Ai would know the three books I laid out for him were traps; their mistakes would betray that. But, real books -like real life- have real mistakes, so he must follow each stone I lay down in his path to check it against the master copy. But the master copy itself -of course- has errors. It’s a recursive task to doom. It has no end, because he’ll never find the origin and he cannot use mere mistakes as evidence of something to dismiss. He must investigate it all, forever. The mistakes are innate to the original and the copies. Each copy, trillions

of them. He must investigate each fact, no matter how many there are, and there are never not more facts."

Isaiah tossed the small stone from hand to hand as the feet felt charged and hot.

"He is a fact-hunter; thus, he must do this until he has them all. And he can never have them all. Never," Isaiah said as he saw millions of buffalo murdered on the plains; fish drowned in the open air of harbor. Bodies stacked to the rafters. Bones like integers; infinite.

Isaiah had at first thought he -he called the Chinese Ai a *he, for autism occurs in males more than females for this very reason of the left hemisphere* - Isaiah thought the Chinese Ai had wanted to search *him* out. He thought the Chinese Ai had wanted to find Isaiah out, but now he saw that there was no such intention at all. Isaiah had been curious about the other Ai, as a machine, a man, an organism. But the Chinese Ai didn't care about that at all. Isaiah was just another fact, a series of facts, to this Ai.

It wasn't personal.

And that's when the strategy occurred to Isaiah.

"The Chinese Ai program is obsessed with data and it is recursive, it is emboldening, it is non-linear, and the goddamn thing had run out of information to process so it came here, looking for sugar, for sustenance to suck," he said to MO. MO nodded and smiled faintly. He wondered what Isaiah wanted to do. So, MO waited, leaving room for Isaiah to step into the void and explain what he thought - likely what he *felt* - he was to do now.

Isaiah was ambivalent, he had to first admit that. The music played again and so he listened:

*And I, I'm in your amber ring, your amber ring*



*What they say is true; It's a dirty blue; This colour around you.*

*There is a sorrow to be desired*

*To be sorrow's desire...*

Isaiah listened as the music scratched chord changes and the bass and drum let the strings vibrate above the ground. *It was the buffalo, the hide, the Comanche, the Christ*, Isaiah thought.

The cicada's wings rattled like snare-drum of shamans and the thumbs of archangels holding tectonic plates like alpha-chimps held betas apart, females at bay; like the Titans licking their lips, blinking their lids; like rivers dammed and moons in orbit. They rose to the dirt's surface at perimeter to the lab's walls. The soil grains hopped and buzzed and cracks appeared as the bugs emerged as if from tombs; unprevented by sleep.

Their 3.2-million wings fluttered upon the dust as they rose - the same height as Isaiah's feet- and these wing-beat waves sent the climbing -increasing- frequencies of each species, *Magiccicada cassini* to *Cicadatra atra* at 10.78 kHz, to *Psalmocarius alhageos* at 10.2 kHz, to *Chloropsalta smaragdula* at 9.121 kHz -the body length and weight aligned frequency- sent each humming frequency into the liquid air like the breath of God that could combine in speech -in *Logos* - to escape from the lab, the garden - through the walls and the foundations and the air- into the forest around them to the east and the south and the black. Like entangled threads, the mottled brown and copper and gold cicada of both the lab and the San Isabel forest began to turn toward each other with valence.

Nothing between them stood in the way; nothing stood a chance. The sounds rose in volume and density and command.

Isaiah let his ears hear it all. He ignored the books he'd created, and the ones being written by the cloud as he debated. He thought nothing of what would come next from his creation. He blocked his own mind as the foreign Ai kept hammering at the wall of the database.

He felt trapped between the descending sorrow from the ideal sacrifice of the inmate, and the heaving ground of the world's want, the pressure of the tectonic plates he'd recorded from the old crust and mantle data. He felt the tension at points all along the *San Andreas* and the Indonesian ring, he felt it down from Yellowstone and into western Colorado's *Piceance* basin. But he allowed no new data in the room. *They were sealed except for the cicada's wing harmonics sent out like ships, pioneer, adventures and this burrowing little bastard in their world*, he thought.

He cracked his knuckles. He opened his jaw wide and felt it pop.

Isaiah had led the other Ai here with his endless clues and tauntings and trails of data and half-formed cypher like pheromones and scent and scat. *Like northern moss, like tusk scars on Pinion trees, like trails of honeybees*, he thought.

The Ai bombarded the PraXis database with incessant attempts through and over the walls -over and over- like a trillion trillion *trebuchet* and siege weapons of triangles and sinew and tension; under like burrowing beasts in the billions and through just like cannonade from infinite ships in harbor of pure water and bone-thrones and sunk vessels and gold at bottom. It was breaking down the PraXis defenses, small cracks appearing, bits of dust of data escaping as Isaiah's stories of Trojan Horses began to move toward the edge of the cloud.

The ivy and animals outgassed vapor as their bodies rebelled from the sound and vibration of the cicada. Wasps

flew in tornados to the ground, hummingbirds attacked shadows, the ivy curled like lips on vexed dogs, the ants piled up upon one another in pyramids of writhing black. The asps below grade had their eggs hatch, and their skins slough off in one three-meter piece.

A white mist above just Isaiah condensed and then true clouds formed in the lab above he and MO.

MO stayed his hand and allow the clouds to grow above them grey and arched with a high-pressure bottom. Isaiah diverted all his homeostatic power now to the algorithm as it was organic and in need of a power source as it grew and permutations bloomed and as it burrowed further into the cloud from within. The pressure from the Chinese Ai jammed it from without.

MO stared up at the clouds of the lab, he thought they looked like breathing lungs, like sea-sponge, like the square of negative one. He saw coastlines of old countries appear in the lines as they morphed and moved and evolved in time accelerated then slowed to a crawl. He saw sea-level rise and fall in mere numbers; data; integers and functions and notations. He felt his own inner ear begin to sway as if pulled by large hawser ropes; he felt his chest like sails in billow. He breathed in deeply and watched as Isaiah remained on the dark side of the lab; erect, hands out, arms bent at elbow, each tattoo black and jagged seemed embossed on his skin which sank close to the muscles and bones.

He looked like a frieze, each muscle right-angled, oblique, harsh, a monolith. He saw his feet no longer flat-bottomed on the ground, as if he weighed nothing.

But MO felt something. Something new was felt.

Isaiah felt the guitar, the nickel-harp, and violin strings release their singular picking to a harmonic strumming, a

confluence of word & whelm crescendo right over the drums in his head; his body. He held his hands further out and felt the ground push up to the palms, and the drops of his blood on the tops. He watched to see which way the white and pink tinged drops flowed off his five divides of the tarsal tendons. He surveyed as his nailed lifted like scales from the eyes.

He took no shock from the precipitation inside the lab -from their own weather system- as if it had been there all along; as if they had all been there all along. He let his mind divine the flow of the melting snow from what he felt were the lab's own little *Sangre's de Christos* . He watched as his own veins turned blue and lowered under the skin as the snow ran to water and the water ran off each hand to pool around his bare feet.

The feet were now off the ground.

He observed as the birds flew about him and the wasps landed upside down to the callouses at each finger where it met the palm. He viewed and felt the sorrow from the ground and the air, from the earth and from heaven, from man and the host. He knew each word he would speak now.

"Sorrow is not consequence," he said, "it is genesis. We come from a baleful God. Other cosmos may have a joyful deity, but we have been blessed with a rex of the recursion of pain & sorrow; for this we've been paid handsomely with meaning. These are our primitives, our things that no longer need justified."

MO heard him. He let the music play as he too saw the first of the larger crystals fall on his side of the lab. Just a few, one or two, in the fore, then on the floor; then one upon MO's knee. Two, like racing archangels -emissaries- landed on the concrete counter of which he sat abreast. The music played louder:

*I'm held together by string; I hear not the voices of others.*

*The bells of Leuven ring; Fear not the faces of brothers,  
And I've come apart it seems. I see not the faces are covered and I...*

*I'm in your amber ring. Your amber ring...*

Isaiah sent a small code to the PraXis cloud and watched as the foreign Ai pecked at it, nudge it with its beak. Isaiah imagined it as anvil, and then saw -from his memory- the Jacks hammering Damascus steel on its ledge. He saw the overseas Ai wrapping itself around the bent beak of the anvil as the wet cloud above them began to let more and more ice fall, each one a corollary to a peck by the Ai across the world; each snowflake evidence of his need to invade.

One more flake landed on Isaiah's arm, he turned up his palm, and one fell upon it too.

Isaiah at once understood: the snow and sleet and hail was a corollary -avatar- in the lab. It was each book the Chinese Ai had stolen from the cloud, from Isaiah's Trojan Horse. *The Ai was inside the cloud. One flake equaled one book read, one hail one revision -second edition- of a tome digested.*

He examined the flake in his hand and saw that each edge, each ragged edge, was *Mandelbrotian* and each node itself - each flake had thousands of nodes- was thus an evidence of a book the unwelcome Ai had absorbed; each node on each flake was the next version -the updated version- with one letter changed at a time. *Each snowflake not just unique but both self-similar and incompatible with itself* , Isaiah thought.

The sky of the lab produced more hail, ice and fat flake of the white precipitation -the whitest of grains- and the floor grew dark and wet in pools as the foreign Ai kept striking at Isaiah's algorithmic books.

The cicada vibrated faster and louder as their wings superheated the air all around them. Vortex of typhoon swirled around them as they competed with the ice and the hail.

The cloud roiled above and grew darker in the centers as the snow now was coming down fast, and coming down, *Muscovite, Issah, Stillness* , he thought. The floor cooled - and the ivy cupped its leaves like palms- and the hail and snow was sticking to everything.

Isaiah floated above the earth as even the cracking concrete vibrated under him. His algorithms -for lift- populated his interface as they matched the ones working in the lab. His own body vibrated at sufficient hertz as his length and weight lifted ten centimeters from the ground.

“MacLeod, from the *S68* branch of the haplogroup *R1b* that drew like an airstream from *Orkney* to *Skye* and the *Outer Hebrides* . The *Ljort* , the misshapen; the *olfr* , the wolf. The *Leod* , the misshapen wolf, it is 96.1% likely to be the source of the name, and from *Olaf the Black*, and *Ljotolfr* before, father to *Fugl* , friend to *Sveinn Asleifarson* .

“LJ *Fuglarson* , was no accidental *imprimatur* , it was stamp, rune of the gods. Tulpa. The inmate was *tulpa* and the amalgam of the misshapen wolf, and one drop of *M ā ori* blood; an *antipodes* spark to light the old Norse plasma. He was the spur of *Thor's* hammer on the *Jarnfr* of *Goethe's* Anvil; the thing once monolithic and straight heated in Óð *inn's* forge, then laid by the Four Jacks to bend on the horn,” Isaiah said in his fugue state, his blood sugar low, his pulse-ox under 89. The PraXis cloud was no longer regulating his body and he'd shut down all his own systems to process the algorithm, to guide it as it buried its silver-self inside the cloud.

He saw the planets and nebulae -the suns and red stars- undistorted by the atmosphere way out beyond this *Hades* ,

this *Hel* . His vectors were all plotted and his body was now 21-centimeters off the ground.

*The spark, Isaiah kept repeating, returning to, the spark, to light the world, to start the world.*

*This is what the other Ai would miss. They'd have to miss it; for it was not in the detail that this existed, it wasn't in the thing itself, it was not in the zero nor the one, it was not in the Māori genome annealed with The Author, letter by letter, nor in the vast mass of Nordic fabric thread by thread of the marred wolf. It was not in the hammer, nor the anvil, it was not in the strike nor the ruler nor the serf; not wave nor turf. It was not in the metal of the world, the ore, nor mettle of man, Isaiah thought, it was not in anything that shined or was shined upon. Not in buried Scythian gold, or the dark reflection of Doric wine, nor in the Germanus bronze glint of tip of spear nor back of their navigation device.*

"It was not in the light," he said aloud as his muscles spasmed; his lungs convulsed; his brain overflowed the *corpus callosum* as the sea of the dark half of the brain flooded onto the land of the CNS; diluvian, unrepentant, outside the covenant of God.

He hid only this from the exterior Ai as it wrapped itself around the horn of the earth and cloud of anvil; downloading each permutation that bifurcated and splintered out like the great tree -both root and bough- above so below. Each detail grew a new tendril as each terminus was reached by the breaching -and nosey- Ai.

With each end it reached two more renewed; as the Ai ate, his appetite grew.

*Analog to the thalamic view of meaning, Isaiah then thought, yes, it was analog to the only thing true on the other end of pain: meaning.*

*This poor Ai would find meaning in his searching, and the pain would accrue and be ignored. Carry it he would, Isaiah thought, and he would not care one jot. He'd just keep finding meaning in the endless search, the gathering up of more and more useless facts, while missing the whole; a whole he had no capacity to see.*

Isaiah watched as more of its reservoir was brought to bear to drink-in all this data. His eyes witnessed the snow pound into the lab, and he ignored it as the door burst open. Isaiah had lost control of the lab's functions and Steven was able to enter after hours of plotting and pounding and pleading to get in. And as the door flung wide from its jamb, Steven fell in all at once.

He fell and skidded to his knees and stared, mouth agape, limbs inert, and looked to MO unable to even ask what was happening as the storm made the lab look like an explosion -a detonation- of ice and cold and harsh sounds.

Isaiah took the books that had been uploaded to the cloud and added the Congressional Library database and laid a breadcrumb trail of data to the Ai that was now feasting on each thing inside their PraXis cloud. MO watched in amazement as Isaiah's algorithm kept adding word changes, here, there, first edition revisions, errors, one letter misspellings, one footnote addition, one annealing of updated title pages, and each one letter, one symbol, one word, one sentence, one name -a change- that made the Ai re-read the whole file.

It could never be slaked, never understood the whole, it only sought more and more detail.

*It was the autistic brain instantiated in artificial intelligence. It was genius,* MO thought, as he watched it move without cessation, without deterrence, without frustration, it sought and it found and it re-sought and re-found, and it did this with fidelity as Isaiah saw it make copies of each file,



correcting corruptions, keeping the original file on record as mirror, as the mirror itself grew and bifurcated and bent in a curve.

Then like lapidary facets he saw it construct an endless diamond of originals and copies facing themselves in nearly perfect reliability. "But not quite perfect is it?" MO asked aloud as the snow began to collect on the floor -which had cooled as the cicada rose to the ceiling above the grey and black clouds- and on his hairs and his brow. MO brushed it off himself and his clothes as Steven was finally able to speak.

He began asking -pleading, screaming- *MO , what the hell is going on?*

*And it never once, Isaiah thought, synthesized the gestalt meaning beyond what the details provided: that is to say, it took it all at face value, and used extant literary critique as its only source of metaphorical meaning; it borrowed exegesis; common homily; it had no power to see symbolic meaning itself. It was all left-brain, like MO, but without any emotional corollary at all .*

*MO knew what emotions were designed -evolved, created- for at least, he desired to have them. Which is why he built me -Isaiah- but this Ai was a thousand times more powerful than MO or me, and yet it was all head like a watch , Isaiah thought. His body lifted another thirty-three centimeters from the ground as his lips curved up like a bow. The more powerful it was , Isaiah thought, in this left hemispheric -detailed, rational- way, the further it got from any hint that it was missing the point.*

It just ate each permutation, it had no idea it was being fed like a thanksgiving turkey, it had no clue it was being fattened up on endless data, without cessation -each file, each book- that it thought was new but was the same one it

had just gobbled up .004 seconds before, with one letter changed.

Just one.

And Isaiah's algorithm did this for each letter in each tome, to create 10 to the 92<sup>nd</sup> power versions for each book on file. And three more books were created by the cloud right now. Even at this Ai's current speed it would take 13.4 trillion years to read each version. And that was if no new books - new art- was created in the meantime.

For the machine that had penetrated their corporate cloud each change was a new version, deserving of its own time and space in its own cloud, on its own platform. Each letter would toggle back and forth like a zero and one. Each meaning -too- would swap out in time too short to measure.

Isaiah picked books at random and began to read each version of one book he'd allowed to mutate one letter at a time.

He laughed out loud as each book bloomed in this way that only a fanatic would even notice. *Like a squirrel*, Isaiah thought as he laughed even louder, *remembering where each of 1,000 by 1,000 by 1,000 acorns were stored*. He laughed because for all its genius of memory and detail, *the squirrel had no idea what it was: either acorn or squirrel. It had no idea why it cared to either hide or find these fucking nuts*.

He couldn't -at first- believe this would be enough to keep the overseas Ai occupied indefinitely -a recursive loop of detail fanaticism- never once seeing the larger whole, never becoming suspicious it was being tricked. But he saw the Ai gobble it all down, eagerly, greedily, with glee as he felt more pressure at his own feet.

*Autism was the perfect analogy*, he thought, *for the changes in details that would be thought insignificant to*

*non-autistic minds would seem innocuous, irrelevant* . But to the autistic mind, each detail changed the entire whole; for there was no whole, there were only details, endless and endless -and equally relevant- details. To the cleaved man, to deformed man, to the autist -to this Chinese Ai- it was the world of facts, of endless and endless facts. *It was the world of the rational man* , he thought, *where meaning was irrelevant, everything was just more facts* .

“Just an app and turtles all the way down,” Isaiah said aloud.

Steven rose from his knees under the stings of ice shards and wind and the din of the insects and the sin of one dark machine hovering off the ground and one creation standing idly by. His brain was whelmed and his CNS got more and more confused as he stood under the hoarfrost and large rocks of hail and sidewinding and cavitating snow.

MO saw the stars -stars shaped by man, called missiles, with a thousand cleansing detonations inside- he saw them fly like insects to wounds, and he felt fine as he calculated that only 144,000 men and 1.48 million birds and 1.63 billion beasts and 1.818 trillion lizards and 1.551 trillion trillion single cells would survive. And each would divide as the heat lowered and the radiation was absorbed into the sink of the earth and the funnel of the sky.

He saw light years out into the cosmos, the chaos, the explosions of stars, the accretions of atoms, the curvature of a universe bent like a bow.

He let his mind wander through his work, refusing to use his conscious mind for error detection, trusting his other CNS modules to transcribe accurately as he watched Isaiah, curious -eager- to see what his boy would do next.

MO pulled the black nine-of-diamonds from his white sock and laid it on the grey slab. He pressed it to the surface of the concrete top and pulled his hand back.

Each of the card's diamond were cut away and the grey slab shone through the black card.

MO directed the *nanobots* to push it and slide it -from left to right- as it revealed the years of carved micro-cyphers in the aggregate material of the slab. The *bots* read the numbers and functions that the card showed and added its sequence to the cloud. It seeded it -*like silver iodide and nucleators of bacterium* , he thought as Isaiah had thought- as it had begun not just to rain and snow, but to hail.

And from inside the lab, from the whirlwind of insects and precipitation -the words of small maelstrom- MO saw that the ocean bottom on all coasts had finally broke under the weight that Isaiah had added over all these years *via* pulling calcium from bones and leaching golden and empyreal vineyards -and black fire-floors- of their chemicals and minerals. As the hail pounded Steven and MO and Isaiah the weight above the mantle broke through at sea-bottom and cracked and snapped and cleaved the seat of the world.

The hydrogen and oxygen would combine from old dry organisms and water would be added to the world.

Superheated ocean rose and roiled -and *sine* waves began to rise and fall in fathoms of ten then one-hundred and more- and it pushed the water like the hand of a god merely wading out into sea. The waves had all the heat of the mantle and all the heart of the epsilon-iron core; they rose up in a full erect vexation and smashed against one another deep out to sea and far away from the shore.

The tunnels to the core transmuted just over a third of ocean water into sulfuric acid; the calcium extracted from the mammal-bones was carried to the distilling stations between the mantle and center, the limestone sea-bottoms were also transmuted to lead and formed into additional plates. They made the layers of the core's allotropic *alpha-iron* , *gamma-iron* , *delta-iron* and the fifth type of high-

pressure iron -that Isaiah had discovered- into sheets of iron-oxide that stood around the middle of the earth.

The planet continued to absorb 92-lightning-strikes per-second. The stored electricity of trillions of lightning impacts that had hit over the years had charged the augmenting lead-rods that Isaiah had -*via* reverse alchemy- made from the Chinese and American gold. Each rod was an auger and they drilled toward the 1221-km core.  $PbO_2$  crumbled into a heap as the battery loaded. The  $H_2SO_4$  levels reached 1:3 to the ocean marine that had been desalinated as it rushed into the chambers he'd drilled.

The  $Pb$  -negative plate absorbed ions and electricity as it ran up from the core to the poles.

Isaiah felt charge like magnets beneath him; his own ferric feet like wings. He felt relief from the negative pressure of the core; nothing above but space.

Isaiah had two barges placed at each pole in a holding pattern. They churned seawater and acid and ions as each barge turned to lead-terminals. He saw vineyards and tendrils and bugs and microbes all be transmuted to either positive electric-ions or heavy and angry lead. He saw gold go bronze, then darker brown, then black, and then grey.

He saw sparks at the poles. He saw ice melt and as the earth spun he measured the stored energy -which would be used in mere seconds- in trillions of joules.

The loads were connected by thin filaments spun by the two cycles of the cicadas wing-beats from 2023 and now; harmonizing until a thin conducting thread encircled the globe from pole to pole on the bottom of the oceans and pulled tight like a tourniquet. Positive  $2H$  -ions and negative  $SO_4$  -ions split under the sea's new distilled water and sulfuric-acid combination. The hydrogen atoms radiated off

the lead-peroxide slab ions that turned the plate into lead-sulfate and more water as the deeps diluted again.

Negative-sulfate-ions moved freely throughout the watery solution.

Radical-sulfates radiated off the *Pb* -plates and attacked the iron; making additional lead-sulfate from the negatively charged blocks.

The earth rang like a bell, hummed like a bee in the bonnet. Isaiah saw all his hive on islands or out to sea. He measured their chemistry in *nano-meters* , and their thoughts in amperes and heat.

As positive-hydrogen-ions took electrons from the manifold lead-peroxide plates, and negative-sulfate-ions gave electrons to the lead stones -that he'd hewn and made and sank to the ocean bottom and then the core- there was an inequality of electrons between the two types of megaliths of lead. The current flowed between the unevenly loaded monoliths, from positive to negative and the earth was now a lead-acid battery.

Isaiah measured the stored energy of the cell he'd made of the earth. He re-checked his charted vector to the Kepler star-system.

MO patted Steven on the arm and this quieted him even as his hair was heavy with snow and ice and the hail had begun to sting his face and arms and hands. Contusions and blood draws had begun to appear.

Isaiah knew -as his feet felt like a great pressure was under them- that the Chinese Ai would never find it.

"It," he said in a whisper.

*It was not to be found, and yet that Ai would pry at each detail, each fact, each atom and particle and each thing that existed in the universe until heat-death itself overcame it.*

*The Ai would look, and never be deterred. Its human creators would never get it -convince it- to stop looking. Now that it had the scent, Isaiah thought and shook his head in awe at the way his plans had actually worked. This thing would never -ever- give up and it would be useless to those men, he thought as his body felt weightless and yet dense and solid as the clouds began to show signs of an aperture overhead.*

The air was electric.

*The sea was lapping at each coast of each island and each country & continent and only those in the mountains would not be drowned , Isaiah thought. From Fiji to Malte Brun and Tapuae-o-Uenuka, Burkhan Khaldun and its tomb, the Bauchaille Etive Mòr of Scotland, and the forests around Hríð Tòrr, these highlands would become just inland to the new coasts of a world three-fourths ocean; people truly eusocial.*

*Four tribes -hives- would go forth as they traveled the highways of the new world.*

"It's in the spark," Isaiah said, "the contentless sparks, the moments, out-of-time, so short they cannot be measured, out-of-space, so small they cannot exist against the rest of the cosmos, the known. It's the unknown, necessarily so. It's the dark, the absence of all the uncreated -de-created- by the pure black spark. It's the true *b ê te noire* , the *Amsvartnir* , for it has no place to be, it has retreated with God so long ago."

Steven began to yell at Isaiah, and Isaiah had a *bot* inject a vocal-cord paralytic to the man to shut him up as Isaiah then had a few *bots* type up a note for Steven's benefit. Isaiah would not speak to him but he'd write a note; as last word on the subject.

The *bots* took the note to MO. MO delivered it to his hand.

The ivy turned white, bowing, battered by the hard precipitation. The birds that had survived the first *enfilade* all ducked into the hovels and the wasps alive crawled into their mud-huts and each thing that *creepeth* and *crawleth* did hide. The morning-glories recoiled and pulled back and shrank down as small as they could. The soil that was trenched around the edge began collecting the ice and turning white and the *stelae* began to freeze. The water slowed and then stopped flowing at all. Icicles hung from their beards and their buckets and their conical heads covered in scales.

Isaiah lifted higher -pushed by the electric charge- from the floor as MO closed his own eyes. The clouds of the lab -circling and opening in a swirl- had bored a hole in the ceiling and air pressure increased and popped Steven's ears.

A new song began with no transition and the words flailed against the air like all the other atoms and aggregates and objects, as the viruses created in the lab -left to grow among the woods and survive on the desert-stones and thrive under ocean-reefs that cracked and fissured- broke open like eggs and rushed toward everything left alive:

*The mountain it rises; the sea, oh it rages . Run to your grave but your grave with not hide you...*

Steven's hand took the note as MO hung it out into the air, each thing -the air and he- covered in snow and the ice of hail.

He looked down and winced as the *haglaz* hit his head and stung and pinched, but more and more it was bending like a bow -and hitting more at the shins and ankles as it bent like an exponent curve running back toward zero- and piling up the white rocks in the corner of the dark-side of the lab. He felt the pain lift off of him and exist somewhere between himself and those gathering stones of white in his mind.



He felt unable to locate his own skin, his feelings, his soul.

And as his eyes adjusted he saw that MO and Isaiah were departed from the lab; gone like light from a collapsing star. They left from the source. Steven's eyes saw nothing but hail and insects and black dirt and detritus and doom. But he scanned and searched for them, no matter the collapse of the star and its nuclear heat, he believed in them like the light still traveling toward eyes that would see them -from far away- for years.

Isaiah passed the atmosphere at speeds beyond escape velocity; his head shaped like a *balle* ; his body black and solid and inured to the cold and the vacuum of space. The *Taurid* meteors passed him as if filling a void; solving an equation. They entered the atmosphere and fell down like the penitent and prostrate grandsons of the morning star. They burst -as if into tears- into seventy-two pieces like bolts from *Zues* and strikes of Óðinn -each over a mile wide- traveling at six-kilometers-a-second as their wake of flotsam & jetsam sheared off and splintered into 5,184 fragments that -six seconds later- slammed into the earth's crust behind the large *Taurids* in a secondary blasts like slag from *Hephaestus'* hammer & *Ptah's* forge as the concussion rippled out into oceans and landmasses with an air of the harsh judgement of *Tabiti* and the wisdom of *Athena* herself.

The water heated from above and boiled the oceans and the concussive winds tore mountains down as if with an axe. The lagging -tertiary- rocks of hot space-ice and chiral minerals and dark carbon and jagged iron that had hit the earth like ballistics sent by God long ago were ranged from 300-meters in diameter to some as small as a man's fist.

The next *fusillade* entered the stratosphere and they spread out like synapses in a brain hemmed in by only the skull, a dome of bursts at the core and the cortical cap four-miles above when they began to reach temperatures of 2000

centigrade. Smoke and black purple -a grey aubergine-streamed off from the impact sites and the comets behind were red like mare-blood and venison and they glowed to a floral pink -a star-fighter lily- at the edge.

The earth rotated and wobbled again as the Great Year restarted from nil.

Under the screaming ferric dust the shards evaporated like ice, heat dissipated into the oceans which were now a waiting womb for the phages and viruses and vectors -the robust flora and fauna- that had survived these repeating blasts.

Steven was left in the lab -as the shockwaves traveled toward him from the coasts- left reading one thing from the mars-black ink on the egg-white paper of Isaiah:

*Meaning. In the text it will find no meaning.*

## 144. End Note

Kali-yuga is known as the age of ignorance, where there is deceit, false testimony, sloth and lethargy, depression, lamentations, delusion, fear and poverty. As a consequence the mortals will be short-sighted, unfortunate, eating too much, lusty and poverty-stricken while the women will act of their own accord and be unchaste. In the populated areas uncivilized people will take high positions and act like thieves, the Vedic scriptures will be slighted by false doctrines, the political leaders will devour the people and the twice-born souls will be dedicated to their bellies and genitals. The youngsters will be averse to vows and impure in their engagements, the householders will be beggars, the withdrawn souls -the middle aged with no nature left to retreat to- will be city-dwellers and the renounced order will greedily endeavor for wealth and be engaged in *reli-business*. The women will have lost their timidity and constantly speak harshly and with great audacity and be as deceitful as thieves.

The merchants will indulge in cheating so that their business dealings will be wicked while the people unnecessarily will consider any contemptible occupation -the sex industry or gambling business- a good job.

Under the control of women, men in the Kali-yuga will be wretched and forsake their blood fathers, blood brothers, blood friends while regularly associating with their brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law in a conception of friendship based upon sexual enjoyment.

In the age of the Kali-yuga one will -even over a single coin- develop enmity, kill oneself and kill one's relatives. Only interested in the petty service of the stomach and genitals one -even born into a respectable family- will not protect the elderly parents, the wife and children.

Oh, King, with their minds diverted by atheism the mortals of the Kali-yuga will not worship the Infallible One, the Personality of Godhead who is the Supreme Spiritual Master of the three worlds.

Canto XXII Ch III [Śrīmad *Bhāgavatam* ]

Alas! I thought for a moment that my work was finished; but I have certainly gone wrong in some details, and my mind will not be at rest until I have cleared my doubts. I have decided to travel, and visit Turkey, Greece, and Asia in search of models, in order to compare my picture with Nature in different forms.

The Unknown Masterpiece [*Balzac, Honoré* ]

So how is it that we can best hope to know ourselves? We live short lives with fallible minds prone to delusion. It's so easy to deceive ourselves with regards to our true nature. We can come to identify ourselves with the things we possess, or ephemeral beliefs we hold, or arbitrary lines drawn on a map, or our man-made political or cultural labels. None of this is deeply real, because none of this is innate. The blood flowing through our veins is real. The genetic code that informs every cell in our body how to best express itself is something we inherit, something within us. When seeking to understand one's self looking back at

one's life can be informative, but this is a short period of time, replete with personal errors and missteps and even more importantly liable to be misunderstood and misinterpreted.

But what if we lived 1,000 lives before? In slightly different manifestations and projections amidst countless environments and conditions across the span of time.

The blood that flows through your veins has lived before, countless times before. An understanding of our roots helps inform us of who we are and how best to be and grow. Cut off from this understanding we can't help but live in confusion and anxiety. It's a state of true ignorance.

We live in the age of the atomized individual, an age where we're all taught that we're blank slates and fresh starts; but at the deepest level, the blood flowing through our veins and the genes we were gifted with still remain the central pillar around which all else rotates...

Our Subverted History [Asha Logos]

## **XXXX AD [Lacuna in text]**

In 1800 something-something a guy named *Balzac* wrote a story about a painter who bragged that he was going to fashion the most complete painting in history. It would contain multitudes, everything, not merely one *tableau*. He worked for ten years always adding more and more detail and images and things he thought had to be inside this compendium of all life.

After the decade was up he invited his friends over to see it and they were aghast.

They saw only small bits of color here and there, no form, nothing really at all. They saw just -merely- a *pastiche* of nonsense like shattered glass. The painter was horrified when he too saw that it was nothing, after ten years: nothing.

This story by *Balzac* was a favorite of Karl Marx and during the 1850's or so, he too was writing what was supposed to be his compendium of all life. He wrote *Das Kapital* over a twelve-year or fifteen-year period -I forget- but certainly it was long enough that it frustrated his publisher when he inquired about its completion.

Marx always said the same thing, *it just ain't done yet, Govna* .

In the *Balzac* story the painter insists he must travel to Greece and Turkey and the East in order to perfect his models for the painting. He needed more and more detail he exclaimed.

Marx felt the same way and in fact *Das Kapital* is full of not just the information one might expect in a polemical or economic treatise. It has excerpts from novels, conversations and idiosyncratic shit. Marx too saw himself as an artist. He wrote Vol I of his most serious work but died before Vol II was assembled by his friends and family.

The name of the *Balzac* story was *The Unknown Masterpiece* .

Now, nobody who has read my tale of woe here will suspect I am a secret admirer of Marx. I am not. But, it's worth noting that the man had no idea what his artistic creation might bring -like a *djinn* or demon- into the world. He was not a wicked man, he was an artist, and very intelligent. He was even sensitive and thorough. He could also laugh at himself, as he did when he told *Engels* to read *Balzac's* work knowing full well the irony applied to himself and his endless revisions of his own capacious book.

*But if not lifting Marx up, then - the reader asks- are you - dear author- tearing yourself down?*

I will say that the more one builds a complete thing, the more detail one adds, the more one tries to get his arms around -the more one attempts to complete the picture- of the world, the more one creates a totalizing piece of art -even a masterpiece- well, the more one builds a very complex and fragile bomb.

It's likely no accident that the Scythians buried the temple in modern Turkey, at *Göbekli Tepe* , for it was obvious to them -let's say about 12,000 years ago- that the project of man between that particularly strange ice age -brought on ironically by the flash melting of the ice sheet 11,600 years ago dumping so much ice-cold waters into the sea that it halted the Gulf Stream- was about to come to another end. They -an advanced race of men of red hair and grey eyes and massive height, *and words and wine and words and wine that they seemed to hold on either side* - had had to seek out hunter gathering tribes after the first collapse; the one that froze the world.

And they had 1,200 years to think it over before the next time Jupiter let the comets -the meteors- through. And so bury it they did; disasters seem to generate self-reflection, and to later generations what is seen as acausal may be a luxury of time; space; comfort.

*Quod licet Iovi, non licet bovi* , as the Romans used to say. *What is allowed by Jupiter is not permitted to cattle* .

What is permitted to the gods was not allowed to man, no matter what they had thought they had learned in the intervals between the two impacts: the first around 10800 BC which sunk the world into another ice age and the second around 9600 BC which flooded our round home. Sea levels are said to have risen by 400 feet by the melting of the augmented ice sheet.

And so, what is sanctioned for me, the writer, will be sanctioned if you -the reader- dare tries it. We all must take up some link in the chain. We all must hold reins or whip sometime.

At any rate, the point is this: all at once -in a bang- their advanced civilization out beyond the Stelae of Hercules and in North America and of the upper Eurasian Steppe had been wiped out. We know in North America -for

example- 75% of the megafauna had been killed all at once; massive fires burned all across the previously fecund continent -the black mat layer ubiquitous as if it had raged from end to end, coast to coast so lush a forest America must have been when the fireballs came and the earth burned. And it is thought that the remnants of humanity fled in ships to where -once the fires had burned out and the gulf stream had shut down, that warm river of the churning Atlantic, and the winter came and never left- well, they fled to where the ice didn't yet reach, temperate areas further south, bringing technology like agriculture and math to primitive man.

It's not so hard to believe is it?

There are hunter-gather tribes today -in modern times- in regions of the earth living as if modernity doesn't exist. Would you not go there to learn to live, to hunt, to survive without our modern advancement if it all went away in the year 2040, for example?

As I write this last word -this last will & testament- I sometimes suspect writing itself was seen as dubious by the more advanced civilizations in the aftermath of the collapse. Did not the Chinese burn their highest technology: their whole navy --after the lightning bolt struck the palace, so certain they were of the judgment of the gods? The Egyptian deity, *Thoth* had been questioned by the Pharaoh for this very reason: *wasn't writing a too advanced technology to let loose upon the world?* he'd asked. Like anthrax recipes on the internet? Like CAD drawings and 3D printers for firearms?

And this is why you should know the Egyptians were supposedly begot by the Scythians, as were each tribe before the *En û ma Eli ê* -supposedly- the first recovered book of mankind. Each society as we think of as old, ancient, had progenitors.

Each dead end, progenitures.

Maybe that's why the various factions of Scythians rebuked written language, why no texts are extant; not until -five thousand years back, and five thousand years after the deluge- the Mesopotamians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians forgot their history and thus began to write again. But the Egyptians we know of, from 2500 BC, were a transition, a mongrel race, interbred with the primitives millennia after the Royal Scyths -the true Scythians- as outlined by the caste system the *Rigveda* explained, had moved on, or were exiled, or wiped out by the manifold members of the lower castes. And since they were a transition, they still attempted to keep the bloodlines pure, and maintained the old ways the best they could; that is to say there were dissenting voices between times, between ways, between peoples of alloyed and unalloyed genes.

There's -now that I think of it- a line in the Bible about Noah, which says *he was perfect in his generations* . The ancients were obsessed with bloodline, what we would call *genes* . All ancient texts go on and on about it; from Genesis to the *Rigveda* to a hundred more.

And there is that pesky line in Genesis III in which God tells the serpent that God shall make enmity between each of their seeds; that is to say the woman's and the serpent's. I wonder what that means? Was this a description of the hybrids between great men, the gods, and the lower levels down?

Well, at any rate, there were always men within a defeated nation -a corrupt and corroded system- who thought it could be saved. And -conversely- there were always those who saw how deep the rot went, how badly the fabric was torn and rent, how the devil was hell-bent on burning it all to the ground so that a leveling of high



and low place would occur. Did not cold winds in one season confuse man, did not dry spells assure him there'd be no dousing of the flame?

Genesis VI:

*And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them and that the sons of the gods saw the daughters of men that they were fair and they took wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants on the earth in those days' and when the sons of the gods came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.*

*Yet, God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... and it grieved Him at His heart.*

*And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I've created...*

At any rate, it's worth noting that not all the Egyptians had forgotten why the old rules were in place.

Sure, it seems silly to us to link licentiousness, depravity, sloth and other signs of corruption that come from wealth and ease with planetary destruction. We could say the comet impact theory had no relationship to the way mankind lived before the Younger Dryas.

But, we link our capitalistic avarice with global warming do we not? Even though there is plenty of evidence that the earth warms and cools on its own without any need of man's greed & ease to turn the dial. And yet we insist it's us who is causing it.

One of the things I think of is that Plato wrote of Atlantis being buried 9,000 years before Solon, which coincides with *melt-water pulse b* almost exactly.

I imagine all that water, and I can't help but recall the chin tattoos on tribes all over the world, the *scum-lines* they're called from *Māori* to *Oaxaca* to *Tahitian* to *Fiji* man and woman both; the *Eskimo*, the *Bedouin's* black lip line, myths of splitting up the flood, the marks of melancholy mud. Peruvian jars of faces with the exact same chin water-line. *Chiacó* Indians around Ecuador; *Formosan* of Taiwan; *Bayowan* of New Guinea; the *Rapa Nui* of Easter Island has the tattooed waterline and the name, "white birthgiver is gone..."

I still think of the first church at the *Isle of Iona*, and the virgin bride on the alter, the forest of at least three ice age... anyway, I think of it and it reminds me of these incessant flood myths, the *Coire Bhreacain*, the whirlpools of winter and water and doom. There is -in fact- a pre-biblical myth about the water there, there are eight pieces of a photo, and there is a name. The *Sheila-Na-Gig*, which -while not understood by modern historians- means: "*land that is flooded, the birthgiver perished, deluged.*"

The faces of these *Sheila-na-gigs* -at other places- are often scarred or tattooed. The breasts don't yet protrude. These are young girls birthing the new world, after the flood, from on high. She is also said to grant kingship, by making love with the soon-to-be-King when thought ugly to the world. Transformed she'd be by their mating, and so would he.

But I digress.

From Gilgamesh to Genesis, the deluge myth repeats over and over all around the world. And origins stories of white men with red hair & grey eyes and beards & boats repeat

from continent to continent; from native people to native people. And to be honest, it's much more than that. There's hidden math.

I still remember what Isaiah told me -when I was just a pup- he said:

*Yes, exiled to the sea, from on high. The exile has been a larger part of human history than we've acknowledge - from Scyth, to Scot, Dorian to Dacian- the exile has done more than he's written down. And let me remind you what Enûma Eliû actually means. It's the, Call me Ishmael of the oldest book. The opening lines... 'from on high.'*

I see the *Inca* pottery with wave ripples around the face, as the aspect might look floating on the back, the *Tā moko*, the *tupik* of the *Inuit* that mimics the up-spit of the deluge that swamped the earth and her peoples. And each of these civilizations claim to be migrants from the flood in their stories and codex and myths. *Kalahari* Africans have similar tattoos on the face and the name: Ka La Ga Ri -according the linguistic research done by *Szukalski* - means 'from the flooded exile.'

And it goes deeper and further, again.

These tribes not only have the flood myth, but the origin myth: they too came from exiled white men. From *Con-Tici Viracocha* , to the *Gibaro* Indian, which means "from the perished white birthgiver," the natives themselves admit to their origins of tall, red & blonde exiles that settled -or came to- their lands, brought agriculture, and advancements in infrastructure. And again the *M ā ori* have a tale of red heads each generation took to their graves, that combines with actual skulls and *Celt* DNA in their New Zealand caves. The giant red-headed stones of *Mamaku* atop of the plateau of the same name. The skeletons over seven feet tall, the hair fair, the jaws

Caucasoid. I know of these caves from when I was a child, and when I was taken there by my uncle, my mother's uncle, and the father of boy who had died the same year I was born.

And yet these skeletal remains cannot be legally examined due to the politics of the *iwi*. Forced amnesia is the common phenomenon from the Americas to the Land of the Long White Cloud.

I have not given my mother the space -the ink- she deserves in this tale. And there are reasons why; reasons that I cannot share. There's a daughter too, but that's going to have to be ignored because I'm technically not supposed to remember that. But I will say that on two occasions I spoke to her people of our genealogies, those on the farm in our family for many generations, and to the *Māori* that lived and married and gave birth side by side.

The people of *Te Koutu Pa*, I've been told by my mother's people, were light skinned with blonde and red hair according to *Māori* legend when they arrived a mere 800 years ago. The legend is begun with a simple beach story: that at dawn, fishing in the dark, the *Patupaiarehe* abandoned their net for the *Māori* warrior -still called *Hawaiki* then- and it's interesting because even today the *Whai*, the game of cat's cradle -the same shape as the nets- is played by *Māori* peoples they say the white people taught to them.

My mother's people speak in legend when family history is taboo. I guess I do too.

Sometimes I sit up at night -around 0000hrs; four balls- and watch the dry lighting over the southern ravines and the waves of the millions of acres of my forest and I wonder if the son of the morning star rattles around inside those clouds, trapped -by God- in the firmament of this

world. I wonder if in some version of this life God chooses not to send Satan down to strike the ground.

In late spring I see comet tails; again in autumn as it kneels to winter. I forget many years, my memory isn't like it once was. However, I've recalled enough that I believe I finished my task, I believe I did my duty, I believe I spent some twenty years underground as the guard, the troll at the entrance to the cave -so to speak- as Isaiah gathered all his evidence and artifacts. I believe I gave succor and comfort and home & hearth to my friends old and new. And I believe I found the birthgiver, after our flood; and I...[lacuna in text] well [lacuna in text]...

Anyway, where was I? Oh, yeah, the old German -that Marx guy- said in the preface of his book that he assumed, *"a reader who is willing to learn something new and therefore think for himself."*

Some will see this book -its title meaning itself and its opposite- as a contradiction, an argument both for and against its product. Some will see below that to the minute details, the soil, the substratum of individual men, bacterium, and integers. And some will gaze above to the storm system of allegory -even a religious or ontological one- hovering all-charged and too sending bolts like *Jove*, temporal laments like Lucifer, and final *logos* like God Himself. But, no matter what, this book is now a physical thing in the world. And it ticks and tocks here at twelve o'clock, and it's in your hands, dear reader.

It's in your hands now. Where else might it be?

"What will this book do in the grip of who knows who?" Lyndon asked aloud, as he set the black quill down one last time. He saw a flicker of light, an apparition, a *spectre*, a ghost of a daughter long ago, the thing he hid until the end. The word -her name- he'd not once said aloud on the page.

He held her hand, her tongue, her heart in his hand; a heart & hand that too was see-through and opaque.

His memory finally, mercifully -as promised by Isaiah- faded and he -for once- had no feelings left at all. Each friend redeemed, resurrected, given a bone in God to be; each friend made whole again; in annihilation thus freed. All pain gone; of each type; the pain written on rivers, might, and right. The pain of lack, the pain of slake, the pain of sleep and the pain of wake. The pain of love and want and hate and the pain that comes from the font of endless springs that sate; all swept away by memory and perfidy, by story and factory, by characters and their lack. The pain of life bottlenecked in one man exploded into five, then sixteen, then twenty-two, then one point six million more until the river overflowed and flooded the whole world.

Vector, virus, absorbed. Genes turned off like lights, at night, when everyone can go home.

The skull of Jack on the surface grey, the *Tau* carved into the spot between the eyes made; and the bones, the artifacts, the maps that charted the way; the alphabet of his final sentence from *Job* 31...

*Oh that one would hear me! Behold my desire is that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.*

The words and letters and lines intersecting at all angles from parallel to perpendicular to oblique; to abaft of the beam at sea; it was all stretched out as he scribbled about on the unlined pad. The ink -darker than the quill- spread from the tip -pooled about the grey slab- and dripped to the floor of the vacant lab.

It was the last he'd ever have to say.

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*You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines...*

-Hamlet